GIANT E3 BLOWOUT!

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Including The E3 Hot 50 & All The Latest On PS3, Wii, & Xbox 360

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WORLD EXCLUSIVE

ISSUE 159

JULY 2006

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"An alien-abduction epic, Prey casts the player as Tommy, a reluctant Native American hero trying to save himself and his girlfriend from a gigantic organic spacecraft--a sentient Dyson sphere powered by the artificial sun inside its shell--that is strip-mining the Earth for human food." – Edge

"The environments have a fleshy, biomechanical, organic style that hints at a variety of filmic influences...The flesh-and-bone body of the alien ship is merged with a variety of stolen alien technologies that mess with gravity, direction, and relativity." – X360

"...Possibly the dawn of a spiritual awakening for the shooter genre." – PC Gamer

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Mega-publisher Electronic Arts is busting out of the racing mold with this current- and next-gen racer. Not content with merely reinventing the single-player career paradigm, the company is introducing video games to a whole new style of automotive competition. Join us for this world-exclusive first look on page 42.

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E3 2006 REPORT

It's the biggest annual event in gaming, and we of course bring you all the news and analysis you need. Full breakdowns of all three console manufacturers, explanations of all the crazy claims made at the show, and more are all part of our massive E3 coverage.

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THE E3 HOT 50

Faced with an overload of fantastic software at this year's expo, Game Informer picks the 50 titles that every gamer absolutely must know about – and gives you the scoop on every single one of them. From Gears of War to Alone in the Dark, we've got what you need.

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GAME — PAGE

STAFF

People Who Actually Get Paid To Play Video Games

SHOCK AND AWE

ANDY McNAMARA
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

I'm sure I wasn't the only one that was floored by Sony's announcement of a $600 price point for the PlayStation 3. While it's a lot of cash, i don't think the cost is unreasonable. The PlayStation 3 has everything but the kitchen sink inside it. That said, the price point is going to be a nightmare for Sony's PR and marketing machines to overcome, especially when you consider that many of the third party games, like Grand Theft Auto, will be available on the Xbox 360 and will likely look the same to most consumers.

Sony will sell each and every PS3 it puts in the pipeline this year, even at this outrageous price point. However, it does leave the door open for the other two contenders, and I think it's highly likely that both will capitalize on Sony's overzealous approach.

What this does do however, is put the console war on hold. Microsoft, Nintendo, and Sony will do quite well over the next two years. The real battle begins when these console manufacturers try to reach outside of the hardcore gamer crowd. Sony will have to aggressively lower its price point, Nintendo will need to keep third-parties supporting its system, and Microsoft will just have to keep doing what it's doing.

I do feel that Sony's only hope to reach its previous dominance of the market lies in delivering entertainment that simply isn't possible on the other two systems, and that means a monster 50 gigabyte game that pushes graphics and gameplay to never-before-seen heights. But even then, I wonder if that is enough.

Industry insiders are putting the market share at 40 percent each for Microsoft and Sony, with the remaining 20 percent for Nintendo.

Personally, I think the Wii will do even better than that. Its unique gameplay opportunities and sub-250 dollar price point will make it an easy choice for gamers as a second system, if not their first.

Regardless, Sony's domination of the video game market is likely over unless it pulls a rabbit out of its hat. That said, the PlayStation 3 is going to be awesome and I know I'll be there day one. Of course, I'll have all three. The real question is: How will consumers react and what will be their choice? Anything can happen, and probably will.

Enjoy the issue.

Cheers,

Andy >> *andy@gameinformer.com*
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Matt >> *matt@gameinformer.com*
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Adam >> *adam@gameinformer.com*
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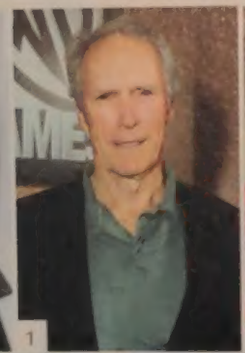
GISPY

Candid Photos From The Seedy Underbelly Of The Video Game Industry



1 Clint Eastwood was on hand for the debut of the Dirty Harry game, and his very presence made us feel like sissies 2 Joe and Jeremy celebrate former GI Online staffer Chris Cook's birthday with buddies from Sega, Koei, and IDG Entertainment outside the Hooters on Hollywood Boulevard. Chris gets classier all the time! 3 Steven Spielberg stopped by the Nintendo booth to check out the Wii and shake hands with Miyamoto, creating a vortex of geek fandom that nearly consumed the entire L.A. Convention Center 4 The GI posse and Vivendi Games' Eric Reynolds visited the famous Roscoe's House of Chicken and Waffles, and witnessed the horror of what a hungry Miller can do to a chicken 5 Matt and *American Idol* castoff Ace Young plan their upcoming world tour 6 Kazutoyo Machiro, Akihiko Yoshida, Daisulee Watanabe, and Akitoshi Kawazu from Square Enix's Final Fantasy XII team couldn't be more thrilled to pose for the GI Spy camera 7 Gaming legend and cell phone enthusiast John Carmack chills with his boy Kato 8 Jennifer Lam reacts to boyfriend Charlie Sinhaseni's proposal in last month's GI Spy. She said yes, by the way. Congratulations!

DEAR GI The Readers Strike Back

GI COMMUNITY

Game Informer has a thriving online community, and this is where they can sound off about issues facing the gaming industry today

THE QUESTION:
How happy are you with your Xbox 360?

It already has a fantastic library of titles for a starting console, and even better titles are lined up for the future. Though it has no true killer app, the 360 has only provided me with great game after great game.
gamorshane

I'm already happy with it, but I'll be more happy with a copy of Too Human and Halo 3.
Sangheli

The 360 is a disappointment to me. Although they have a library with a few great standout titles, none of those seem next-gen. When I went from PSone to the PS2, I was in awe. Now from the Xbox to the 360, it just feels a little better.
chrisredfield

I didn't get my 360 until early February, but it was well worth the wait. I'm finding more games to be excited about, Xbox Live/Marketplace is phenomenal, and the future looks bright.
Quasidodoir

The overall lack of effort to really take advantage of the system is a disappointment. I want a true next-gen leap from a next-gen system, and so far only a handful of games deliver that on the 360.
Mr Vegeta

My current life consists of food, school, and Oblivion. Screw sleep. When it comes down to it, I think I'd shell out the $300 just to play Oblivion.
dontalktochris

Do you want to make your voice heard? Weigh in with your opinion at www.gameinformer.com/forums

GI: GAME INSPIRER

I just wanted to thank you so much for the "Stay in School" article that appeared in issue 157. I am currently at a point in my life where I am trying to decide on a career path and still have no idea what my options are. I've often thought about going into the gaming industry, and reading your article made it sound like it could actually be attainable. I just wish that it had been longer and more in-depth.

Amanda Holt
St. Paul, MN

Your "Stay in School" article pumped me up and inspired me to work harder in art class. I am a 19-year old student, and my degree will be a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Studio Art. I just have to ask: Is what I am studying a good way to pursue a career in the video game industry?

Leon Coachman
via email

We're happy that aspiring industry insiders found our article helpful. After it printed, we received piles of letters from readers with questions about how to pursue a career in gaming. Unfortunately, no matter how long or in-depth an article on industry jobs may be, there is one fact that is hard to escape: It's never a sure thing. Is a BFA in Studio Art a good start? It certainly can't hurt. You could even graduate from a respected school like UAT, but it doesn't guarantee you a place on a dev team. It isn't like Resident Evil, where you can just find the key that unlocks the door; you need to have the necessarily skills and (with a little luck) be in the right place at the right time. Other than that, the best thing you can do is keep yourself informed as to who is hiring out there by checking out developer websites and message boards (see the letter entitled "That's Unpossible" for advice on how to communicate on these message boards).

ALPHA MAIL

I had my suspicions that you write your reviews based on alpha and beta versions of games, and you proved me correct when I received my April 2006 issue. My issue arrived on March 20, exactly nine days prior to the street release of Kingdom Hearts II. Now, I want to know how you can write a review (complete with English screenshots) that far in advance before the game has been officially released in the USA? How can your readers trust your reviews when they are solely based upon alpha and beta versions of a game?

Kirk Bramlett
Saint Charles, MO

You are right that alpha and beta versions often have bugs or incomplete features. Kirk, but they are mainly used for internal testing and QA by the developers. [illegible] these versions [illegible] not sent out to the media for review. In most cases, your deadlines make it impossible to play the plastic-wrapped retail copy of a title, so the game companies send us final code in advance. Because it takes time to manufacture hundreds of thousands of copies of a game, this final code is actually available earlier than you might think. Developers aren't usually pulling all-nighters the day before their game ships to stores. The versions of the games we receive are practically indistinguishable from the product you pick up from your local game store. If we believe that we have been given a build that is not in a reviewable form, we will always opt to wait until we have a version we can accurately score. It's as simple as that.

THAT'S UNPOSSIBLE

[illegible] been currently looking over certain online [illegible] forums, and I must say that they have hor[illegible] I find it appalling trying to decipher [illegible] in the posts. Why can't they type [illegible] word? I have seen many intelligent [illegible] by this method of typing, and it [illegible] the minds of today's youth. Is there [illegible] we can do to stop it from spreading?

Maaku la[illegible]
via comcast.n[illegible]

Unfortunately, you are powerless to slow the tireless march of Internet-speak. One person cannot make a difference. Therefore, your only hope is to educate yourself on some of the more common phrases and abbreviations. We've provided a short list of terms you can use to conveniently translate forum posts and make those trips online more understandable:

ftw: Feeds the whales (like chum or plankton – describes something useless)

wtf: Wonderful tact, friend! (a compliment)

qft: Quit fire trucking! ("fire trucking" is when someone attempts to extinguish a "flame war")

iawtp: I am wetting these pants (usually typed by the very young or very old)

imho: In my head only (refers to the opinions of a crazy person who hears imaginary voices. Disregard)

NERDTERIOR DESIGN

I've got a new room to decorate, and I've decided to do it in geek style. I've already planned to have Triforces pressed into the plaster and sponged gold, I have Tetris shelving ordered, and I am sewing a SNES controller-style blanket. You often feature some really awesome furniture in your Gear section. Sources? Sites? Suggestions? Anything would be greatly appreciated!

Kara Joshinki
via hotmail.com

Think Geek carries plush 20-sided dice

We're happy to do anything we can to make the world a dorkier place. You can find a wide array of generally nerdy furniture and accessories at Think Geek (www.thinkgeek.com), and more specific video game-related oddities can be found at import sites like National Console Support (www.ncsx.com) and Lik-Sang (www.lik-sang.com). For the more discerning nerd lifestyle, Cool Hunting (www.coolhunting.com) is a great resource for stylish design. None of these sites specialize solely in the decorative arts, but you'll undoubtedly find something that catches your eye. However, even with so much at our fingertips, we're still no closer to obtaining the Holy Grail of Geekery – a 12-foot tall bronze statue of the girl from *Weird Science*. Get on it, Internet!

The Hand Grenade Oil Lamp from Piet Houtenbos

Send your comments to Game Informer. Snail Mail: Game Informer Magazine • Attn: Dear GI • 724 North First St., 4th Floor • Minneapolis, MN 55401 Email: deargi@gameinformer.com

YA WIILY

Wii?! I know there's much more to a console than it's name, but come on...Wii? That is absolutely, positively, beyond a shadow of a doubt, the dumbest name any inanimate object has ever been assigned. I love Nintendo, but that name just sounds like the console is for a five-year-old kid. I thought Nintendo might have lost it when they unveiled the controller, but I didn't count them out. But Wii? Is the double-i supposed to indicate two people playing together? Man, get that weak s— out of here.

E.M. Wade
via e-mail

First and foremost, "Bawlz" is the dumbest name ever given to a consumer product, followed closely by "Gizmondo." Regardless, millions of gamers reacted just like this when Nintendo announced the new branding for the Revolution. The strange thing is this: No matter how awful Wii may sound right now, people have already started to use it. Sure, it may be accompanied by sarcastic jazz-hands or eye-rolling, but over time that will die off and it will just be the Wii you know and love. The fact that you will eventually learn to tolerate the name still doesn't make it a good choice, though. Especially since gamers at large have never been known for exercising restraint when it comes to jokes about genitals and urine. We sure hope Nintendo has a thick skin.

GROPING FOR ANSWERS

I'm a fan of wrestling games, and I've always liked your reviews and scores for them (you saved me from wasting $50 on Wrestlemania 21). But when it comes to captioning the pictures for these games, you sound like total wrestling haters! Wrestling is nothing to make fun of – you can't give it a glowing preview, and then on the next page insinuate that Rey Mysterio and John Cena are a couple.

Ruben Nunez
via snail mail

Look, it isn't our captions' fault. A picture is worth a thousand words, and when two half-naked dudes are half-nakedly grappling and playing "slap and tickle," there isn't much to insinuate. The images speak for themselves.

ENVELOPE ART

JULY WINNER!
JENNY-JINYA HEFCZYC
In the holy temple of gaming, no one is turned away...except Azurik. But that's probably best for everyone

Enter the Game Informer Envelope Art Contest. All you need to do is draw, paint, scratch, spit, or carve the best dam envelope art you can think of and send it to us. Please include your name, phone number, and return address on the back of the envelope. If you're the monthly winner, we'll feature your work in GI and you'll receive a video game prize from the Game Informer vault.

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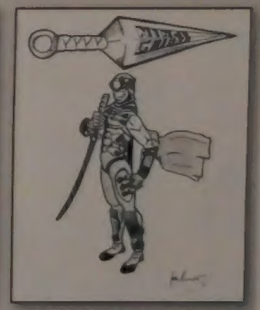
NATHANIEL KOLASA
"Mario" and "dual-wielding" should never be in the same sentence

IAN KNIGHT
"If you call this a 'horse' one more time, you'll be smoking sticky shockers."



JOSE RAMIREZ
You want more Ryu. Instead, you get more volleyball. That is the way of the world

BERYL ALLEE
Shadow the Hedgehog: bad game, worse garnish

JOSHUA GEIER
"I'm too weak to beat him alone. If only Cait Sith were here!"

TITLE

SUPERMAN RETURNS.
THE VIDEOGAME

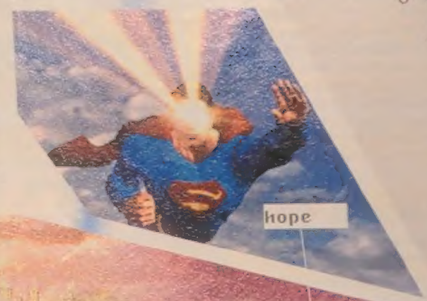
FACTOID: 140 game creators

INFORMATION | DATE OF RELEASE
www.BeSuperman.com

super power full

It takes a documentary, produced every week by an in-house video crew, to help EA producer Jeff Peters keep track of the huge array of powers and attack combinations that the 140 developers working on *Superman Returns*™: The Videogame have put together. "*Metallo*, for instance, is 60 stories tall," he says, "so you might want to fly around the city a little bit, maybe down to the port, and find something really massive – a ship, for example – pick that up and hurl it at him." Each villain has different strengths – and unique vulnerabilities – so attacks that devastate one enemy won't necessarily work against another.

"With a villain like *Parasite*, you may want to keep your distance," he says. "You could do something like grab a fuel truck, throw it toward him, then blow it up with your heat vision just before it hits him." If the ensuing explosion happens to set an apartment building on fire, Peters suggests leaving the fight for a moment to airlift a fire engine to the scene so it can douse the flames, then rejoining the battle. "There are so many different things you can do," Peters says. "It all adds up to this amazing feeling of freedom."



flight manifest

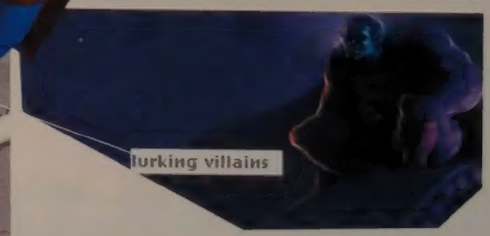
When he was 13, EA level designer Zach Wilson used to blow his entire $10-a-week allowance on *Superman* and other comic books. For the last two years, he's been tights-deep in processor cycles and aerodynamics with the rest of the team working on *Superman Returns*, giving life to the *Man of Steel* with his own personal branch of physics – from takeoff to 800-m.p.h. flight through the densely packed streets of Metropolis to midair hand-to-hand combat.

"The hardest thing with flight in a 3D environment is to make it look realistic and make it easy to learn at the same time." EA's state-of-the-art development methods gave Wilson & co. the tools to nail that balance between realism and playability. "Gamers can be so skeptical," Wilson says. "I understand – I used to be those guys. That's what motivates us: to prove to the world that we can pull it off."

new world mortar

Before EA concept art director Phil Straub and his team could construct Metropolis in the game environment of *Superman Returns*, they needed a map. Building on 2D maps supplied by DC Comics, EA created a detailed 3D representation of the city – first on paper, then in clay, then out of papier-mâché and wood and finally out of bits, pixels and polygons. Eighty square virtual miles of playable space.

And playable means seriously playable: billboards, fire hydrants, cars and tractor-trailers, lamp posts – you can use nearly every element in the environment as a shield, a weapon – or, in *Metallo*'s case, a toothpick.



news

NINTENDO PROMISES CHANGE IN Wii COMING OUT PARTY

After having digested the announcement that the console formerly known as the Revolution is now called "Wii," we were curious as to what other tricks Nintendo had up its sleeve at its annual E3 press conference. You couldn't ask for a more vivid illustration of the vast differences between the strategies and philosophies of Microsoft and Nintendo than the way the companies began their E3 2006 press conferences. While Microsoft served up a bloody slice of the violent shooter Gears of War, Nintendo introduced their annual event with legendary Mario creator Shigeru Miyamoto in a tuxedo, conducting a virtual orchestra with a Wii remote controller. This was but one indication that, as always, Nintendo was set to balance the sublime and the ridiculous in an E3 that, despite some silly moments, turned out to be a grand coming out party for the company's oddly named new home console.

After Miyamoto left the stage, Nintendo's master of ceremonies, Reggie Fils-Aime, took control with his trademark style of high-concept sloganeering. In typical fashion, Fils-Aime dismissed Nintendo's competitors as stuck in the past.

"If all you want is next-generation, you're in the wrong place," he stated. "Because what you'll see from Nintendo is not just next. Instead, it's what's absolutely new. What we're unveiling is the next leap in gaming."

Fils-Aime went on to detail the way in which Wii will challenge the conventional thinking about video games, comparing it to the company's Super Mario 64, which revolutionized gaming with true 3D graphics and the introduction of the analog stick. In Nintendo's view, the industry must expand beyond its current way of making games in order to truly reach to the mass market, and it is gambling that the Wii's motion sensitive controller is the way to do that.

Expounding on this theme of inclusiveness, Fils-Aime observed, "Let me start with a couple of questions for you. Do you know anyone who's never watched television? Never watched a movie? Never read a book? Of course not. So let me ask you one more question. Do you know someone, even in your own family, who's never played a video game? I bet you do. How could this be? If we want to consider ourselves a true mass media, if we want to grow as an industry, this has to change. Today, change begins here, with a new console, just as it already has with a new handheld."

HUNT AS A PACK OR DIE LIKE A DOG

"JUST WHAT THE XBOX 360 NEEDS."
- OFFICIAL XBOX MAGAZINE

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BUILD A CUSTOMIZED HOUND. ASSEMBLE THE ULTIMATE TEAM: SNIPER, SCOUT, SOLDIER, GUNNER, DEFENDER AND COMMANDER. THEN DISASSEMBLE THE ENEMY—IN CHROMEHOUNDS, THE XBOX 360'S ONLY MECH GAME. FIGHT TOGETHER AND ACHIEVE TOP DOG STATUS. FIGHT ALONE AND YOUR HOUND BECOMES A CHROME-PLATED COFFIN.

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TEEN T
Mild Language
Violence
ESRB CONTENT RATING

XBOX 360 | XBOX LIVE

SEGA
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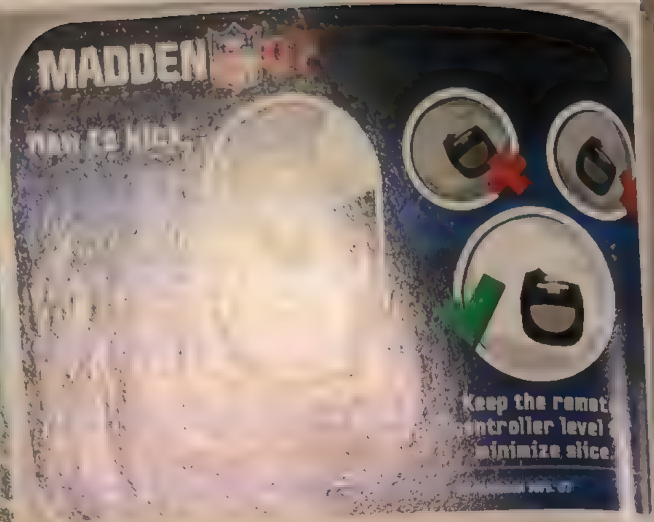
Madden NFL 07



Although Fils-Aime said the company would not release any pricing [illegible] or a specific release date [illegible] later confirmed that [illegible] at under $[illegible] he did tackle the [illegible] what touchy subject of the system's name which drew massive criticism from fans when it was announced in the weeks leading up to the show.

Taking a humorous approach, Fils-Aime announced, "Next [subject] – the name. We want to thank everyone that wrote good things about it the day you heard it ...both of you. Seriously, the response didn't surprise us at all. At first, every distinctive name sounds strange. Did you love Lexus the first time you heard it? How about IKEA? Google?"

Point taken, but that didn't stop us from spending the rest of the show restraining ourselves from blurting out "That's what

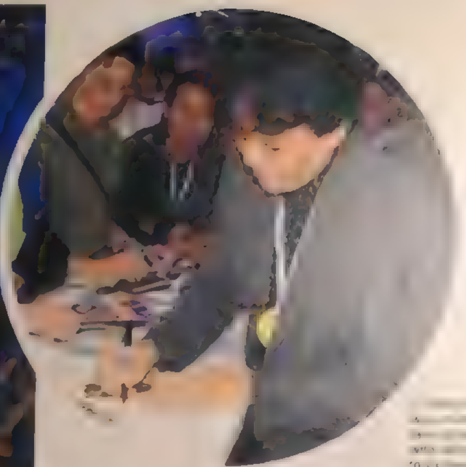

Pokémon Mystery Dungeon DS

[illegible] up [illegible] appear [illegible] the [illegible] was playable on the [illegible] an [illegible] very well. Most [illegible] that it [illegible] franchise [illegible] Nintendo [illegible] that [illegible] planning it's [illegible] addition [illegible] Zelda [illegible] revealing [illegible] new [illegible] Trainer, revealed that the controller [illegible] attachment [illegible] motion sensing technology, and can be used to perform [illegible] spin attack. That was not the only [illegible] Trinen also let the audience [illegible] Wii remote is outfitted with [illegible]

[illegible] to make a bit more of [illegible] huge announcement [illegible] and standbys generated [illegible] talk, Fils-Aime also stressed [illegible] commitment to creating n [illegible] franchises. Three new properties in de opment were shown, including the gr cally unimpressive but very polished ra game ExciteTruck, a hack n' slash title c Project H.A.M.M.E.R., and a mysterious er for Disaster: Day of Crisis, which revo around a terrorist group in the aftermat a tidal wave striking U.S. soil.

Fils-Aime also touted Nintendo's third-party support, which at this point, appear to be a somewhat mixed bag. Promising [illegible] high profile exclusives [illegible] gaming's biggest compa[illegible] EA's [illegible] version of Madden, Red [illegible] Rayman 4, Sega [illegible] Fantasy. [illegible] Square Enix. Red [illegible] launch title, looks [illegible] Nintendo, and will [illegible] adult oriented game [illegible] pan. It's a shame [illegible] conference demonstra[illegible] technical difficulties, [illegible] the majority of the Red [illegible] tion not being shown on [illegible] n. Right now, it appears that the Wii's third-party support could be viewed as either better or worse than the GameCube's. On one hand, the technological gap between Wii and the other systems is going to mean that fans will miss out on many high-profile games that would have been ported over to GameCube in the last generation. On the plus side, it appears that publishers are taking Wii seriously, and the games that are being developed for the system seem to be making a real effort to utilize the novel controller in unique ways.


ExciteTruck shows how the Wii remote can be adopted to the racing genre


[illegible]

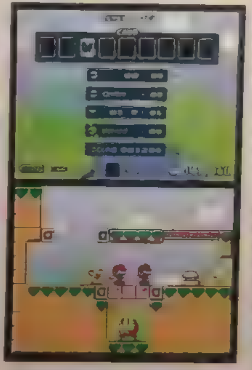
Moving on to the company's handheld business, Nintendo senior vice president of marketing and corporate communications George Harrison touted the worldwide success of the Nintendo DS. Stating that "a little clarity is in order" with regards to the battle between PSP and DS, he cited actual sell-through numbers for DS at 16 million worldwide, while claiming that PSP's actual sales were "millions less." He also unveiled a lineup of DS games for '06 that looked very strong, including such franchises as Pokémon, Yoshi's Island, Star Fox, Diddy Kong Racing, Tony Hawk, Mario vs. Donkey Kong, and a 3D remake of the formerly Japan-only Final Fantasy III. He also unveiled a new initiative called Touch Generations, a line of games that seeks to reach out to older and non-gamers with titles like Sudoku Gridmaster and the popular Brain Age series.

After some of the big announcements, the press conference ended a bit anticlimatically, with president Satoru Iwata taking the stage to (once again) stress Nintendo's desire to reach out to non-gamers and lapsed gamers. He also explained some of the details regarding the company's unique plans for Wii's online network [see interview on page 19]. Finally Iwata joined in, along with Miyamoto, Reggie, and an online contest winner for a game of Wii Sports tennis, which won some laughs from the crowd when character models that closely resembled Nintendo's leaders came on the screen.

Rounding out the presentation was Fils-Aime, who restated Nintendo's position that the game industry must change its ways. "The future of our industry is inclusion, not exclusion...we know that the future is right here. Wii and the DS represent the same thing: risk. Risk allows for progress. We're a company that doesn't run from risk, we run to it. Change is good." After thanking the crowd, he ended the program with Nintendo's new slogan "Playing is believing" and urged the crowd to check out the 27 playable Wii games that would be on the show floor.

Were minutes [illegible] Wii appeared [illegible] rim us of [illegible] booth [illegible] eager to get their [illegible] to get into the gameplay area running up to [illegible] hours. Each day, [illegible] open, one could [illegible] see people literally sprinting to the northwest corner of the hall, and some showgoers even reported being trampled by the oncoming throng.

The good news was that those patient enough to endure the waits (or smarmy journalists like us who get PR people to bump them to the front of the line) were rewarded with a system and games that – despite its esoteric design – appears to be extremely user-friendly and fun to play. Although some games, like Wii Sports or a drumming game being demonstrated, were little more than diversions, Super Mario Galaxy and Zelda seem to indicate that the [illegible] Nintendo [illegible] future [illegible] the things that have made it successful in the past. This philosophy centers around innovative gameplay, its stable of legendary franchises, and the idea that games ought to be accessible to everyone in your family, not just the high school and college-aged crowd who will buy violent titles like Gears of War by the millions.


Mario Vs. DK: March of the Minis

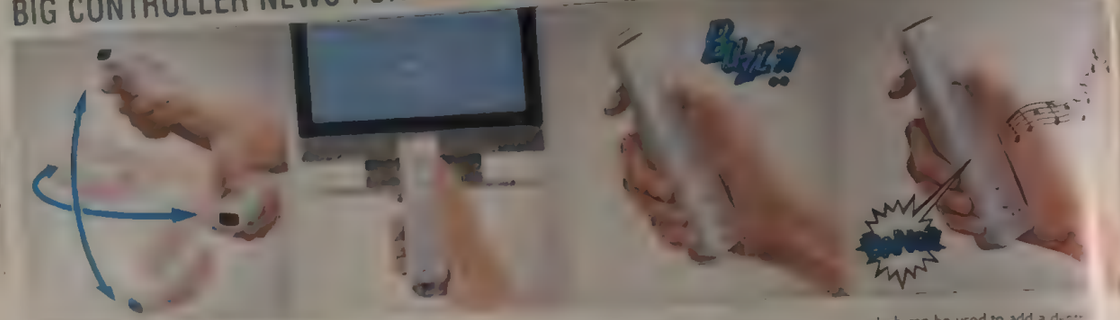
E3 SCORECARD

A-

THE GI PERSPECTIVE:

For a company that's been declared dead in the console wars numerous times over the past decade, Nintendo has an uncanny knack for pulling through with truly innovative titles and concepts at just the right time. While we might never truly embrace the name "Wii," the truth is that it most likely won't affect the system's sales come launch day. Although it's a bit annoying that Zelda has been delayed as long as it has, it will move units on day one, and Mario Galaxy should demonstrate the potential of the new controller in much the same way Mario 64 did with the analog stick. While Nintendo will likely never be number one in the console market again, it's a profitable company that's clearly built to be a player for the long haul. In addition, the success of the DS seems to indicate that there is an audience out there looking for something different. Of course, questions do remain, most notably third-party support and exactly how low Nintendo's price point will be, but all told Nintendo looks to be a very real factor in the next-gen race. Plus, if the more affordable Wii ends up being the second system of every PS3 or 360 owner, it's possible that it could make a run at the top spot in terms of installed base.

BIG CONTROLLER NEWS FOR Wii



One of the biggest surprises of the show for Nintendo was that there [illegible] troller for the system. While the focus for [illegible]

[illegible] which can be used to add a d[illegible] sound to games. For example [illegible] pull the bow back in Zelda, y[illegible] the strings creak in your ear via [illegible] manager of software dev[illegible] Takashi Tezuka also comm[illegible] that it would be used [illegible] ers that it was their tu[illegible] player contests.

[illegible] might be the Nintendo DS. [illegible] Reggie Fils-Aime refused com[illegible] ment on any plans for connect[illegible] between the systems. Tezuka [illegible] more certain that the Wii and [illegible] that potential, so I believe it's just a m[illegible] of time," Tezuka stated. "We have som[illegible] the experience and knowledge, t[illegible] we'd [illegible]

[illegible] defends investment [illegible]

A couple Nintendo employees enjoy a game of Wii Sports in the booth

One thing that Nintendo said at the conference was the idea that the Wii would always be on standby, and always be connected to the Internet. Could you elaborate on that?

As part of the Wii console, when you turn it off – it doesn't turn off completely. It will continue to consume a small amount of power and still be connected to the Internet. What that means is that, if you've gotten to a particular part in a game we could push content out to you, so you get to battle a new boss. Maybe you get a new artifact. Maybe you get a new weapon. But that concept is more to encouraging our current gamers to play more, but [illegible] way of encouraging new gamers to get into the system.

So the idea would be that small bits of episodic content would be uploading into your system when you were asleep?

[illegible]

You mentioned the whole family using it everyday. Will this include things like news updates or news headlines?

All of that is possible. And that's w[illegible]

Microsoft and Sony are really pushing microtransactions, in terms of buying a car in a game or a weapon. Is that something you see as viable?

[illegible]

So you would give third parties some freedom? Since you already have an online store for Virtual Console and credit card information, they could add cars to a racing game as a microtransactions and you would be okay with that?

Exact[illegible]

Is Nintendo specifically planning microtransactions for your own products?

Ag[illegible] for what we plan to do on Virtual Console – everything from what titles will be available at launch, how much [illegible] how [illegible] terms of what content we will push out – all those details will [illegible]

Obviously, Sony announced a price point, and it's very high. What is your take on that in terms of their strategy?

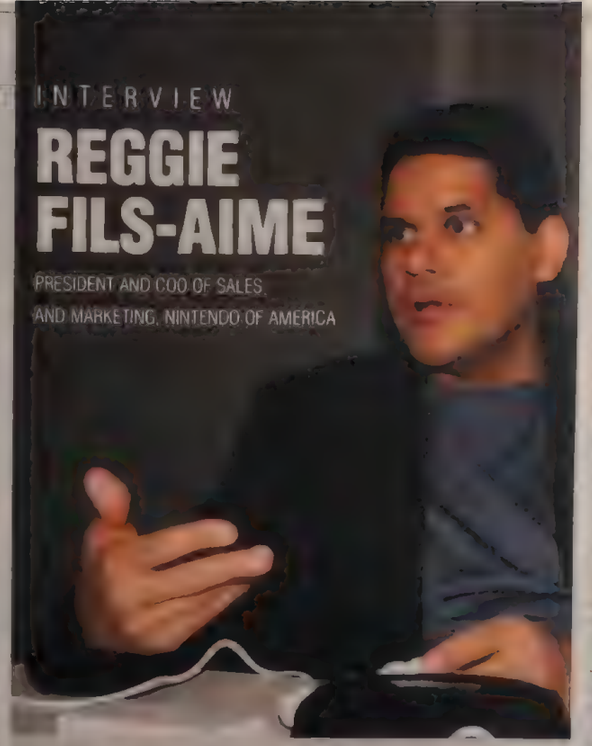
They have announced a high price point that I've come to understand that many gamers gasped when they heard [illegible] that price point would be. That's their strategy. Frankly, they need to have that type of high pricing to offset some [illegible] significant corporate investments they've made into the system. I think it's not gone unnoticed that they've scaled back what's included, at least in their lowest priced alternative. That's Sony, they have their own masters to serve. We believe in making a system that is affordable to the masses. We believe in bringing real technology and real innovation to bear to the consumer, and that's our strategy.

Are you certain Wii will have the lowest price point of the three systems?

[illegible] at full face value. We will be the most fun for the least [illegible] confirmed that the Wii would retail for less than $250 USD. – Ed.]

Obviously, there's been some resistance to the name Wii, at least on the Internet. What was wrong with Revolution, and why did you go another way?

You know, Revolution, as a codename, is fantastic. It really



INTERVIEW

REGGIE FILS-AIME

PRESIDENT AND COO OF SALES AND MARKETING, NINTENDO OF AMERICA

We see the system as something that's going to be used by everyone in the household everyday.

Was Revolution [illegible] pronounce[illegible]

Obviously one of the [illegible] announcements [illegible] controller, which [illegible] ing functionality similar [illegible]

How is it not similar?

[illegible]

Do you have any concerns that their announcements might take away from Wii being perceived as unique in the marketplace?

[illegible]

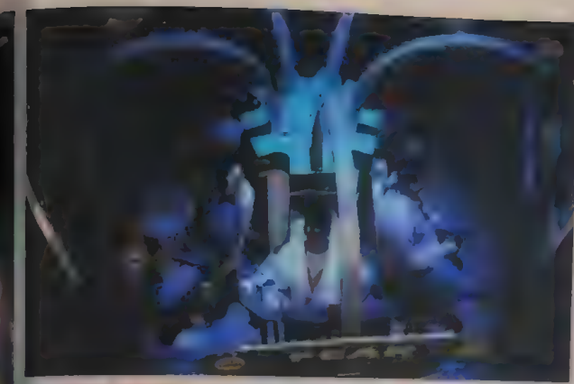
In terms of 360, one of the big pushes for them is what Bill Gates talked about in their Live Anywhere, connecting up PC, phones, and 360 into a multisystem platform. What's your opinion on that overall strategy?

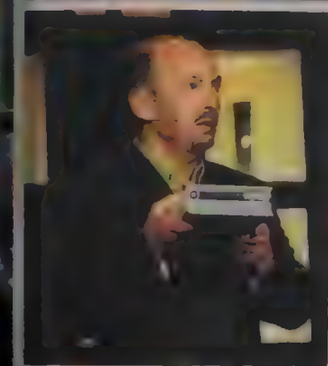
I have to say that I [illegible] they say "gaming on the go," it's a [illegible] Nintendo DS as well as Game Boy [illegible] library of games that is incomparable. It's quite clear that Microsoft is on a corporate strategy to drive Windows and to try to own the center of the consumer's living room. We're a [illegible] ported with highly innovative hardware, and we believe we [illegible]

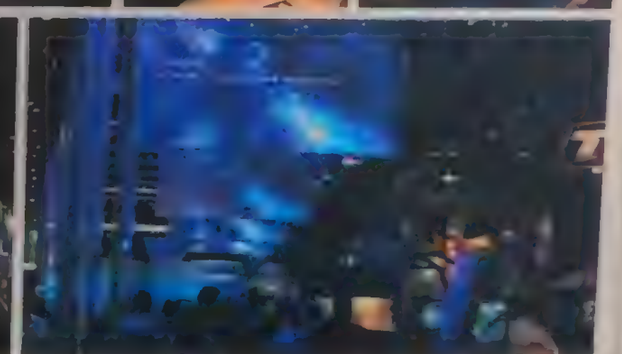
What would you consider a successful installed base for Wii a year into the lifespan in the U.S.?

Our focus is on a substantially higher base than we achieved with GameCube. We think that our strategy in terms of great core gamer games, expanded audience games should allow us to achieve that. Plus, with the stellar third-party support we're getting, really, right at launch, that's another ma[illegible] ference from what we did with GameCube.

MICROSOFT HAS IMPRESSIVE E3 SHOWING







A [illegible] was muddled and weighed down with far too much marketing fluff. Instead of touting the power of 360, the main message seemed to be that Xbox Live consisted of nothing more than 26-year-old, [illegible] fashion models breakdancing and practicing karate moves in their living rooms. This year, we're happy to report that Microsoft did E3 absolutely right, in what was beyond a doubt the best show to date.

[illegible] was apparent from the [illegible] began not with a Microsoft spokesperson, but rather Epic Games' Cliff Bleszinski, who briefly introduced himself and launched straight into a playable demo of E3's most impressive title: Gears of War.

After this bracing and bloody beginning, Microsoft's Peter Moore, who would be the emcee for the remainder of the proceedings, took the stage and welcomed the crowd to the conference [illegible] the next generation [illegible] here, right now, with [illegible] short of spectacular."

Interestingly, [illegible] J Allard and Robbie Bach, two of the architects behind Microsoft's Xbox program who have played large roles in past conferences, were nowhere to be seen. In hindsight, it was a good move, as it allowed the [illegible] Moore to use his trademark blend of humor and sly bravado to achieve a real rapport with the responsive crowd. Moore delivered a message that would resonate throughout the presentation: that games are now central to Microsoft's entire business strategy.

"I'm also excited because this [illegible] E3 since we've made a major organizational shift at Microsoft," said Moore. "For the first time ever, all of our gaming and entertainment resources – Xbox, [illegible] Windows, and handheld games [illegible] a single entertainment devices division. [illegible] move [illegible] is a very important [illegible] that games are driving Microsoft's [illegible] wide vision for entertainment. Our [illegible] one where you, your games, your [illegible] and the entertainment [illegible] your lifestyle always take center stage."

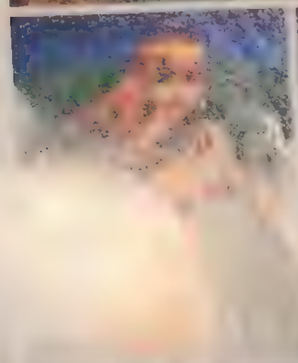
He then went on to boast about the Xbox 360's breakneck success since its release in November 2005. Proclaiming the "fastest start in console history" [illegible] jected that the 360 would hit the five million sold mark faster than the original Xbox, the first two Sony PlayStations, or the Apple iPod. In addition, he praised the platform's strong accessory and software sales, quoting 4.5 accessories and games for each 360 unit sold.

He also acknowledged some of the hardware shortages that had made 360s very hard to come by in the months following launch. He jokingly dismissed rumors that Microsoft has purposely held back units from retail to create a buying frenzy by saying, "Before we get any further, let's take a minute to dispel an urban myth that's been floating around out there. Not a single unit was hidden in Area 51 in the Nevada des- [illegible] ages." He also pledged that the company had spent the last six months doing everything in its power to increase its production capabilities and keep retailers stocked.

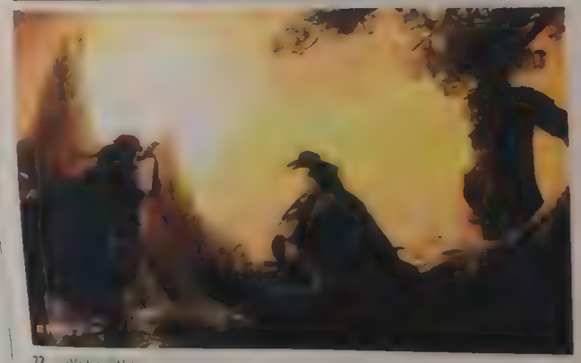
He also credited much of the 360's success to Microsoft's popular online service, Xbox Live, which has so far enjoyed a whopping 57 percent subscription rate among 360 owners. Moore also promised that, if current trends hold, Xbox Live would eclipse six million users by next year's show.

Continuing, Moore praised the breakout popularity of Xbox Live Arcade, the pay-for-play casual game service that has, so far, exceeded most expectations. Building on this momentum, the company plans to [illegible] number of fronts, the most notable being a cavalcade of classic games from companies like Namco, Konami, Capcom, and Midway. The titles announced included such favorites as Contra, Frogger, Ms. Pac-Man, Sonic the Hedgehog, Defender, Street Fighter II, Time Pilot, and Galaga. "These are more than games, they are our shared heritage," observed Moore, "and on Xbox Live, they'll be updated in high definition." He also revealed that some titles will be updated with online multiplayer, Achievements, and leaderboards. Promisingly, especially for the burgeoning garage development scene, Microsoft is also reaching out to indie developers (over 100 in all) to create all new. [illegible] load on Xbox [illegible]

Other notable Live ne[illegible] announcement that the [illegible] would be coming to [illegible] Lumines Live, which will [illegible] tracks by Warner Music [illegible] as Madonna. Later in the [illegible] Moore promised that [illegible] a one-stop entertainme[illegible] trailers, demos, and [illegible] after the show with a [illegible] ing-of" documentary p[illegible] tion with MTV and man[illegible] demos and trailers. After [illegible] in the week following [illegible] million gamers had logged [illegible]



Forza Motorsport 2



consume over 800 terabytes of data. Trailers for games like Gears of War, Halo 3, and Lost Odyssey.

[illegible] switched back to upcoming Xbox [illegible] there are a lot of 360 to choose from by this holiday season. After a look back to two power-[illegible] sports franchises – EA's Madden NFL and Konami's Pro Evo Soccer – [illegible] took time to welcome "the [illegible] to the Microsoft Game Studios family," [illegible] designer Peter [illegible] studios. There's no [illegible] Forza [illegible] wireless steering wheel, [illegible] headset, and Xbox Live Vision camera that will allow you to put photos of yourself on your Gamercard and in some titles like Rainbow Six 3 Vegas. Later in the show, he pulled the curtain up on the long-awaited HD DVD attachment for 360. Unfortunately, no price point was revealed, but Moore did promise it would be a "better bargain than anything else."

Moore did pause briefly to acknowledge the company's problems in Japan, the one territory in which Xbox still struggles mightily. "While in no way do we underestimate the challenges that this market presents us, it's with relevant content that is created by world-class Japanese developers for Japanese gamers that will allow us to ultimately break through," opined Moore. Unfortunately, that "relevant content" still seems to be limited to two titles by Final Fantasy creator Hironobu Sakaguchi's Mistwalker studio (Blue Dragon and Lost Odyssey) and yet another DOA title from Team Ninja (DOA Xtreme 2).

He also noted the need to reach beyond the Xbox's current audience of hardcore gamers into more kids-oriented territory. Microsoft hopes this failing will be at least partially helped by its new property Viva Piñata, which is being developed as an animated series and a game in conjunction with the children's TV powerhouse 4Kids Entertainment. Other younger-skewing titles include the sequel to LucasArt's successful Hedgehog game.

Up to this point, the conference had been a smooth, solid presentation. But Moore dropped the biggest bombshell of the show, cementing what would go on to be termed a tremendous E3 PR win for Microsoft by most observers.

"Speaking of powerful entertainment experiences, I've got an important announcement about one of the most powerful gaming experiences of all time," he teased. "I'm talking about a franchise that generates more excitement than almost anything else out there – not just in our industry, but in all of entertainment."

Doffing his coat, Moore revealed his famous Halo 2 tattoo ("I know some of you thought that was fake"), then joked, "I saved the big guns for the big guns." The "big gun" in question was the very biggest of them all: his other arm displayed a tattoo bearing the logo of Rockstar's Grand Theft Auto IV, which is set to release on both PlayStation 3 and Xbox 360 on the same day, October 16, 2007. As GTA is widely seen as one of the prime driving forces of PS2 sales over the past five years, this announcement represents a real coup for Microsoft and Xbox fans across the world, and was a direct blow to Sony. [For more, turn to GI News page 33]

In spite of its massive 360 blitz, Microsoft has equally ambitious plans for the somewhat stagnant PC gaming market. In hopes of adding some much-needed marketing muscle to the PC scene, a new Games for Windows branding campaign is being launched. This aims to revamp everything from the actual product packaging to new retail displays, which will be roving into most major chains. Microsoft will also follow the lead of such successful titles like Call of Duty 2 and Oblivion by releasing more of its products on both PC and 360 the same day. Two of these titles will be FASA's newly unveiled Shadowrun shooter and Remedy's much-anticipated Alan Wake (a new Microsoft Game Studios signing).

More importantly, Moore promised that Microsoft's new Vista operating system also places a huge focus on gaming. "Windows Vista is built to run games," claimed Moore. "It will be the single biggest launch in the history of Microsoft, and it will be a great day for gamers." Some of the game-centric features supported by Vista include easier installs and being able to boot up your games from the start menu. In addition, a new version of DirectX will make it even easier for PC developers to deliver groundbreaking visuals, a point driven home by an impressive live demonstration of Crytek's gorgeous shooter Crysis.

To underscore the point that Microsoft feels games are extremely crucial to its future, Moore introduced E3's biggest surprise guest. "[I'd like] to bring someone here who's not been to E3 before, and there's no better person to present the vision of where we're taking gaming next. Ladies and gentleman, the chairman and chief software architect of Microsoft, Mr. Bill Gates."

Gates took the stage to massive applause, and appeared affable and genuinely enthusiastic about Microsoft's success with Xbox. So impressed is the world's richest man with 360 sales so far that he guaranteed that Microsoft would have a 10 million unit head start before either one of its competitors shipped its first console.

He also revealed the company's ambitious plan to connect Vista, Xbox Live, and Windows Mobile under the umbrella of a [illegible] called "[illegible]." The [illegible] tion. Gates illustrated just [illegible] idea [illegible] transactions for your 360 [illegible] PDA. If it works as planned [illegible] ded in every version [illegible] this could truly be the new [illegible] online gaming. Still [illegible] would be fun to show [illegible] people. We've got a little game footage of one of the game's that you'll probably recognize. So, let's take a look at that."

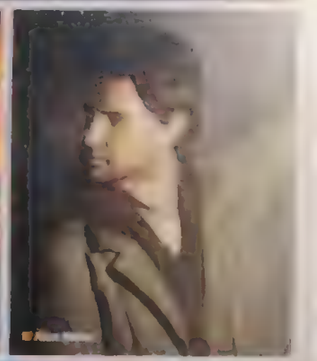
Unless you're completely clueless, we'd imagine you already know what's coming: a gorgeous teaser trailer for Halo 3. Although it showed no gameplay, and revealed little in terms of the game's plot, hardcore fans on the Internet were soon deconstructing every frame to extract hidden clues as to what Bungie has in store for us in the next iteration of its legendary shooter. It was a crowd-pleasing and exciting end to a conference that felt like a triumph for Microsoft.

Shadowrun

E3 SCORECARD

A THE GI PERSPECTIVE:

We've been extremely critical of Microsoft's E3 showings in past years, so let's now take the opportunity to give credit where credit is due. Xbox 360 absolutely owned E3 2006, and the company's press conference was easily the best in its short history as a console maker. As opposed to last year's stilted and gimmicky presentation, this year's had a strong focus on games and delivering hard information to the gaming community. It was also concise, clocking in at a little over an hour, a relief for those of us who were worn out by Sony's two-hour-plus marathon. At least part of the credit should go to Peter Moore, a well-spoken and polished industry vet who is quickly becoming the public face of Xbox 360, who did a tremendous job at keeping the momentum for the duration. Thankfully, the positive spin for Microsoft continued through the three days of the show, as all attendees could see a bevy of extremely good 360 games in production from nearly every major publisher. At this point, it looks like Microsoft's move to start the next generation early is paying off; the early Wii and PS3 titles on display seemed lacking in comparison to second-year 360 product. If there's one thing that Microsoft as a company is good at, it's studying the market and learning from its mistakes, and it appears that this pattern is continuing in video games. Based on what we saw at E3, the next couple of years should be extremely rewarding for Xbox 360 owners.



Too Human

Starting with the press conference, obviously the signing of Rockstar is a huge deal. Can you talk about how that deal came about?

SHANE KIM

Microsoft Game Studios

Giving customers choice with the Xbox 360 Core System is a very important thing.

Going back to the launch of the 360, some people didn't like that there were two different models. Do you think that having two models was a mistake?

I think it was a mistake at a [illegible] with the Xbox [illegible] important thing [illegible] at [illegible] e system. Of [illegible] adds more functionality and capabil[illegible] Live and the [illegible] controller. But [illegible] stem buyer as well [illegible] ing with their two [models] is they've actu[illegible] ally removed capabilities that to my knowledge [illegible] d back to the 20 gig [model]. You can't add back HDMI. I think we took a very different approach. We like giving that choice and that flexibility to our customers [illegible] sking them to make a long-term sacrifice. If they want a hard drive, they can add the detachable hard drive.

Well, on the side of the developers, we talked to some that would have liked the hard drive to be there for all customers.

I don't know any developer who wouldn't rather have a single configuration. It's the easiest thing for them. So from that perspective, I understand. I have plenty of developers that work for me, and they would all prefer a single configuration, but from a customer standpoint, you have to be very careful on foc[illegible] because they're the ones who vote with their pocketbo[illegible]

Does it make sense to have the Xbox 360 console life-cycle to be longer, like 10 years, to allow the penetration of HDTVs to hit around 50 percent?

That's a very complicated question. The one thing I'll say is that we have no problems betting on or investing in the future. That's what we did with Xbox Live by putting an Ethernet connection in the Xbox, because we believed that broadband was going to be the future for online gaming and connected gaming, and we believed that would be a smart strategy for us. And we believe the same will hold true for HD. Who knows what the Xbox 360 life cycle will be? I think it will be around for a long time, and we don't know what the next generation after this is going to be, and what innovations there will be. It may not be anything technical. Who knows? So I think we're in the sweet spot for HD gaming basically 720p, 1080i, that is what customers are enjoying the bulk of foreseeable future.

Will there be any connection between the 360 as a game machine and the HD player at all?

[illegible] from a gaming standpoint [illegible] for HD movie playback [illegible] we've chosen to take the flexibl[illegible] choice, game developers can [illegible] we can count on the HD-D[illegible] All of the feedback that [illegible] people don't believe that [illegible] a high-def drive like that in [illegible] have a high-def gaming experience like Oblivion has a massive amo[illegible] tent, and the DVD-9 has plen[illegible] for that. So, we don't think that [illegible] be impactful from a game standp[illegible] from a development standpoint.

Even though you don't think it wi[illegible] impact games, do you guys wish you had put that drive into the 36[illegible] Sony is certainly touting the Blu-r[illegible] player. By releasing the HD playe[illegible] you're saying that Microsoft want[illegible] part of the next-gen DVD format [illegible]

No, we don't wish we had. Then we [illegible] be doing what Sony is doing, which is customers to pay more for a Blu-ray [illegible] that may not end up being the high-d[illegible] understand why it's good for gamers. [illegible] one has been able to explain that to m[illegible] that capability in every single PS3, whe[illegible] they want it or not.

Bill Gates mentioned the integrati[illegible] of Xbox Live into PCs and mobile. Does the simultaneous release of games on Xbox 360 and PC hurt eit[illegible] market in any way?

No. I don't think so. I think [illegible] going to decide on which versio[illegible] playing, and it is still a very different[illegible] ence, even though they may look a[illegible] similar. The difference between play[illegible] on your computer, versus playing o[illegible] couch on your high-def television [illegible] think is a very different experience [illegible] consumers are going to continue [illegible] the one that's best for them. What s[illegible] to be interesting is when we start t[illegible] more integrated experiences cross-[illegible] on top of Live, like we're going to do [illegible] Shadowrun, like the concept demo w[illegible] showed with Forza, [also in] the casual gaming spa[illegible]

A lot of PC gamers are really used to downloading things for free, and a lot of stuff on Live obviously costs money. Is it going to be difficult to convince PC gamers to pay for content on Live?

We haven't announced pricing yet for Live on Window[illegible] or Live on the mobile space, but I can tell you th[illegible] very sensitive to what has been there before. But no[illegible] has ever attempted to build a service like Live. And d[illegible] can deliver a truly integrated experience, one market[illegible] one identity, then you start to realize that you're ado[illegible] a ton of value there. It's one thing to deliver connecte[illegible] gameplay, it's another to deliver a real network, a rea[illegible] vice, a real economy.

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HOT REALTONES
BAD DAY - DANIEL POWTER — real9284
BEDROOM BOOM - YING YANG TWINS — real9285
ENTER SANDMAN - METALLICA — real9286
EVERYTIME WE TOUCH - CASCADA — real9287
GRILLZ - NELLY — real9288
I LOVE YOU - CHERIE DENNIS — real9289
KICK PUSH - LUPE FIASCO — real9290
POPPIN' MY COLLAR - THREE 6 MAFIA — real9291
RIDDIM - CHAMILLIONAIRE — real9292
SHOULDER LEAN - YOUNG DRO — real9293
WE RUN THIS - MISSY ELLIOTT — real9294
WHEN YOU'RE MAD - NE-YO — real9295

Realtone
We Are The Champions
real9296
Screensavers
move3460
move3464

SCREENSAVERS
move3447
move3448
move3449
move3453
move3452
move3455
move3456
move3457
move3458
move3459
move3460
move3461
move3462

REALTONES Top 15
1) SOS - RIHANNA — real9269
2) WHAT YOU KNOW - T.I. — real9270
3) TOUCH IT - BUSTA RHYMES — real9271
4) BOSSY - KELIS FT TOO SHORT — real9272
5) ANGELITO - DOM OMAR — real9273
6) TEMPERATURE - SEAN PAUL — real9274
7) GIRL - PAUL WALL — real9275
8) IT'S HARD OUT... - DJAY — real9276
9) [illegible] - T-PAIN — real9277
10) [illegible] — real9278
11) DAM CALIFORNIA - R.E.L.P. — real9279
12) ROMPE - DADDY YANKEE — real9280
13) I WRITE S... - PANIC AT THE DISCO — real9281
14) WHO SAYS YOU CAN T... - BON JOVI — real9282
15) RIDE WIT ME - T.I. — real9283

NEED HELP?
WAP [illegible]
SUPPORTED CARRIERS
CINGULAR cingular.com
SPRINT sprint.com
T-MOBILE t-mobile.com
DOBSON dobsonservicelular.com
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SONY UNVEILS PRICE POINT, NEW CONTROLLER FUNCTIONS FOR PS3

W

[illegible] Hirai [illegible] the company [illegible] hardware as the true [illegible]

[illegible] a product to market, and we're certainly not about gimmicks or clever rhetoric or conventional thinking ... The next genera- [illegible]

[illegible] PlayStation 2 [illegible] At [illegible] time over 100 million [illegible] 11.2 million in [illegible] billion [illegible] promised that [illegible]

console like God of War II, Square [illegible] Final Fantasy spin-off Dirge of Cerberus, Final Fantasy XII, and THQ's Destroy All Humans 2

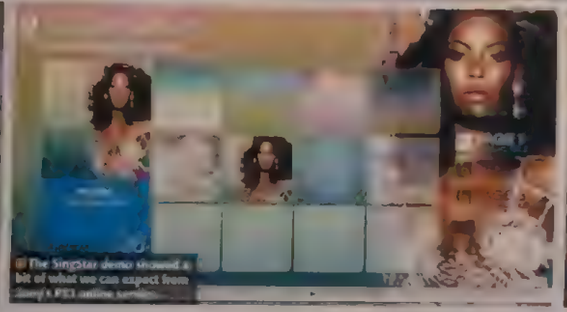
Next up was the PSP, with Hirai [illegible] that over 17 million units had been [illegible] worldwide to date. The key word [illegible] sentence is "shipped," as Nintendo [illegible] made much of point-[illegible] actual sell-through numbers were [illegible] than the stated figure. An addi- [illegible] 12 million units are scheduled for [illegible] is a new PSP Greatest Hits program [illegible] has proved very successful on the [illegible] The first titles in the program include [illegible] Offroad Fury, Hot Shots Golf, Twisted [illegible] and Wipeout, which qualify by selling [illegible]

Eye of Judgement used the next generation of EyeToy technology

Eight Days

Afrika

The Getaway



The Singstar demo showed a bit of what we can expect from Sony's PS3 online services

Lair

[illegible] at least a nine-month period [illegible] was a video of upcoming [illegible] Liberation, Ape Escape Academy, [illegible] Boy (a breakdancing game [illegible] the highly anticipated Japanese sensation LocoRoco.

Two online features for PSP were also announced, including a firmware update that adds [illegible] support and RSS channels to the web browser. Other planned peripherals include a GPS, voice over IP micro phone, and a camera attachment. Although no details were given, a couple of new titles appear to use these attachments, including interactive travel guide software named Planet PSP and Talkman, a utility that translates English into languages like Japanese and vice versa.

Later in the show, Sony's plans to sell PSone-era titles as downloads for PSP were unveiled when Hirai played a game of the original Ridge Racer on the handheld. Unfortunately, Sony's choice of game was poor, as the demonstration of the aged racer drew almost no applause from the [illegible] crowd. Using Hirai to attempt to rouse them by exclaiming "Ridge Racer!" seemed after the show, this quick [illegible] already being passed around the Internet as a running joke among gaming forum users.

[illegible] presentation was PlayStation 3 and [illegible] way to stress Sony's view that the system is by far the most technologically advanced of the three next-gen consoles, dubbing the Cell chip "a processor with power rivaling supercomputers." He also touted the importance of Sony's high-density Blu-ray discs, which hold up to 50 GB of information (Xbox 360 currently uses standard DVDs). Citing statistics that showed the growth of storage needs throughout the PS2 lifecycle, he opined that "by adopting Blu-ray, a forward-reaching medium, we're sending a message to the content creation community that their only limitation in bringing ideas to life is their imagination."

More online details were also revealed regarding Sony's PS3 online program, which – on paper, at least – should be fairly competitive with Microsoft's Xbox Live platform. Popular features like friends lists, video chat, online rankings, text messaging, parental controls, and news updates are all slated to be included. The good news here is that – at present time – Sony says the service will be completely free to users. While Microsoft has had great success with its subscription-based formula, it's clear that Sony sees Apple's iTunes as a better model – giving away the software and making money on microtransactions like in-game items, songs, or episodic content.

Sony Computer Entertainment Worldwide Studios head Phil Harrison demonstrated how this would work from a user's perspective with brief demos of shopping for items in its upcoming PS3 titles Singstar and Warhawk. In Warhawk, there was a long list of items ranging from upgraded weapons to completely new vehicles. In Singstar, a karaoke game that [illegible] players will be able to download new tracks and then sing them over high-definition versions of the actual artists' music videos. While perusing songs, you will also be able to see sidebars that display the current Top 10 sales leaders as well as a "What's New" section.

Of course, improved online is an excellent step for Sony, but the real selling point of any E3 press conference is the games. After dazzling the audience last year with pre-rendered, visually intense movies and tech demos of titles like Killzone and MotorStorm, expectations regarding the PS3's graphical prowess were running high. This year, the emphasis was on actual playable demos instead of elaborate trailers. While it was certainly a more honest approach, the effect was somewhat deflating in some cases; on the show floor, titles like MotorStorm showed almost no resemblance to the videos shown last year.

The first game showcased was not really a game at all, rather an E3-only tech demo called Gran Turismo HD. Using assets from both Gran Turismo 4 and the recent Tourist Trophy, series creator Kazunori Yamauchi did a live run-through of a few tracks running at an unprecedented 1920x1080 resolution. However, on the big screen, it did not look markedly different than the current-gen GT titles running in high definition. As the overlong section of the presentation wore on, you could feel the momentum draining from the room.

Although certainly an interesting bit of technology, a showing of a new EyeToy game called Eye of Judgement (which superimposes animated dragons and beasts over a Magic-style collectible card game), really didn't do much to restore the excitement to the show. Of course, it was certainly better than the fate that befell Game Republic's Genji 2, which looked like an unpolished upgrade from the original PS2 title, and suffered from some bugs during the live presentation. We later heard that [illegible] demos at the conference had [illegible] shipped to Los Angeles that day, and [illegible] game looked [illegible] better than on the show floor, but still, when compared with [illegible] underwhelming visuals [illegible] later for titles like Hot Shots Golf and Formula One, it did seem to underscore Sony's message that the PS3 was eight years beyond Xbox 360 in terms of power. It seemed a bit odd that these titles received so much time during the conference, especially when amazing demos for PS3 titles like Mercenaries 2 and Assassin's Creed were being shown at the show itself.

However, despite some missteps, there was plenty of impressive game footage shown. One breakout hit of E3 2006 was Ninja Theory's Heavenly Sword, a God of War-style action title that was also playable on the show floor. Although the level shown was only a simple arena, the graphical quality displayed was quite literally jaw-dropping, and the finely tuned gameplay seemed every bit its equal.

Other highlights included Insomniac's Call of Duty-with-aliens shooter Resistance: Fall of Man, which is already very polished and perhaps the best of Sony's first-party lineup so far. Jak & Daxter creator Naughty Dog demonstrated its tradition of creating great graphics [illegible] with [illegible] Uncharted [illegible] Drake's [illegible] protagonist [illegible] of an office [illegible] Studios showed a very [illegible] a title named Eight [illegible] which [illegible] overshadowed a too-brief clip of the next Getaway title. Also generating interest was a less-than-revealing teaser for a title called Afrika (which is reportedly a safari title) and Factor 5's devastatingly cool snippet of its dragon title Lair.

Of course, amongst the new titles were some key exclusive franchises, including Final Fantasy XIII, which was shown as a *Matrix*-style rendered video that appeared to be more sci-fi in theme than the series traditional fantasy setting. Even more mind-blowing (literally) was Kojima Productions' Metal Gear Solid 4 trailer. While the graphics are every bit as fine as one would expect, the clip ended on a shocking, dramatic note, when Solid Snake loaded up a [illegible] which [illegible] year all the [illegible] Shock controller – which was [illegible] the exception of one notable det[illegible] movie unveiling the [illegible] controller, we became a bit confused as to what all the fuss was about. These questions were soon answered by PlayStation creator Ken Kutaragi, who revealed that the controller actually includes multi-directional bit function that allows games to be guided by moving the unit in the air. This was then demonstrated by showing a playable demo of Warhawk that uses the functionality. Although it wasn't said outright, the implication was that this was a direct response to Nintendo's motion-sensing Wii controller.

ED SCORECARD

C+ THE GI PERSPECTIVE:

memory. It's strange to say, as the compa
rence spin battle, and even stranger for the f
e next generation
n on the market, and by all accounts nearly e
set by videos like Killzone last year defin
of being able to show
the technology
concerned about rising interest

made are the inclusion of a Wi-Fi adapte
sells an add-on Wi-Fi adapter for $100. The internet
owners in the next five to eight years. If Blu-
only run on HDMI, as has been discussed, last
summer, the real question will probably be
space. If you're simply looking to save games
ent, however, think that we'll be pu
content or macroinstallations, should

First of all, can you talk about when you guys put in the motion sensor for the controller and the decisions made to go with that?

need to go b
ed. And we

At its press conference Microsoft announced their partnership with Rockstar, bringing GTA to 360 day and date with you guys. Why didn't you emphasize or announce the fact that GTA is also on PS3 at your conference?

Going on to Blu-ray. What if Blu-ray doesn't win the format war?

Wait, hypothetically speaking, what if HD DVD does have a certain kind of stronghold and makes it out of the gate and Blu-ray can't catch up? Does that negatively impact PS3?

first and
x at the
three
n HD as well, you're going to again end up

We've seen some rumors that the PS3 may have some trouble with backwards compatibility. Can you talk about that, whether that is true or not? It's been a problem for Xbox 360.

cism, when we talked about backwards compatability for PlayStation 2 with [PSone]. I don't think we're going to
and and say, "Did we say backwards
ment to the consumers in terms of things like backwards
ot try to sweep it under the rug by say-

The Xbox 360 launch was plagued by shortages. With PS3 having two separate hardware options and a multi-territory launch, are you going to be able to avoid a huge shortfall in units on day one?

ficult to try to ramp up

...I think that the Blu-ray disc is going to be the de facto standard for the next generation pre-recorded optical media disc...

You've said the online service will be free. But, will it be two tiered - free just to use some of the features, and then a subscription fee to actually play games online?

Most people we've talked to say the PS3 is more powerful, but because of companies like EA and Activision that do cross-platform ports, it's not really going to show in a lot of games compared to 360. Does that bother you?

Ultimately, if you again look
we have on our platform
nt community
the learning curve
learned . I think will lend itself to more stable and immer-
sive content than platforms that change very quickly. If you
platform

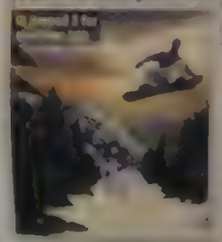
DATA FILE

More News You Can Use

100 BULLETS BACK ON

THQ HIRES STUNTMAN 2

INDIE BUILT DEMOLISHED



BRINGING STAR WARS INTO THE FUTURE

LUCASARTS BUILDS ITS NEXT-GEN FOUNDATION

N

[illegible] R2 units, the developers showed how a highly

are being used in the new Indiana Jones title (see last mo[illegible]

action that showed powerful Jedi using the Force to pick up [illegible] Stormtroopers about like toys. One unfortunate soldier was sl[illegible] repeatedly to the ground before being hurled, along with som[illegible] mental debris, at an incoming TIE fighter which blew up on conta[illegible]

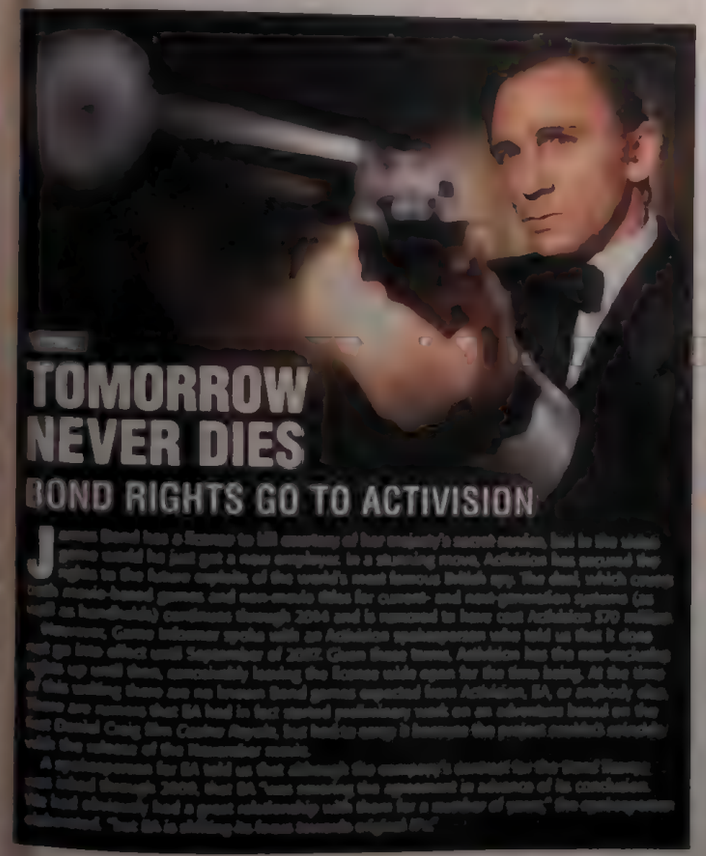
NEWS

GRAND THEFT AUTO IV IN 07

SIMULTANEOUS RELEASE FOR PS3 & 360

Two years ago, Microsoft corporate [illegible] president Peter Moore hared his muscles and showed the assembled [illegible] a hint of bearing the release date of Halo 2. This year, not only have Microsoft [illegible] the manger but the rave reviews [illegible] become more impressive. Rolling [illegible] Microsoft have announced that the first next-gen non-magic [illegible] Rockstar's seminal Grand Theft Auto series will be coming to the Xbox 360 in October 2007.

Although word spread that Microsoft had inked an exclusive deal with Rockstar for the game, that is not the case. The game [illegible]



TOMORROW NEVER DIES

BOND RIGHTS GO TO ACTIVISION

James Bond has a license to kill courtesy of her employer's secret service, but in the video game world he just got a new employer. In a stunning move, Activision has secured the rights to the future exploits of the world's most famous British spy. The deal, which covers both movie-based games and non-movie titles for current and next-generation systems (as well as handheld) continues through 2014 and is rumored to have cost Activision $70 million.

However, Game Informer spoke with an Activision spokesperson who told us that it does not go into effect until September of 2007. Given these terms, Activision has the non-exclusive right up until then, essentially leaving the license wide open for the time being. At the time of this writing there are no known Bond games expected from Activision, EA, or anybody else. There are rumors that EA had in fact started preliminary work on an adventure based on the first Daniel Craig film *Casino Royale*, but hardly any is because the project couldn't coincide with the release of the November movie.

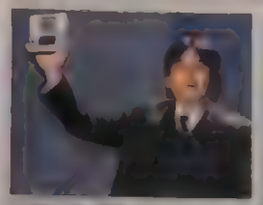
A spokesperson for EA told us that although the company's contract for the Bond license was inked through 2009, that EA "was entering the agreement in advance of its conclusion. We had obviously had a great relationship with them for a number of years," the spokesperson elaborated. "But EA is shifting its focus towards original IPs."

THE GOOD, THE BAD, THE UGLY

When You Want Your News Categorized With A Critical Eye

GOOD

BAD



BAD

In an interview with Reuters, Nintendo president Satoru Iwata said that the company has no plans [illegible] money on the DS. In the past Nintendo has always stated that they were working on the next GB, referring to the DS as a separate "pillar."

GOOD

"Let me be very clear," said Metal Gear's Hideo Kojima recently. "Mr. [illegible] Metal Gear Solid film." If that [illegible] enough, Kojima went on to announce that he has finalized a "class-A contract" for the movie based on [illegible]

BAD

GOOD

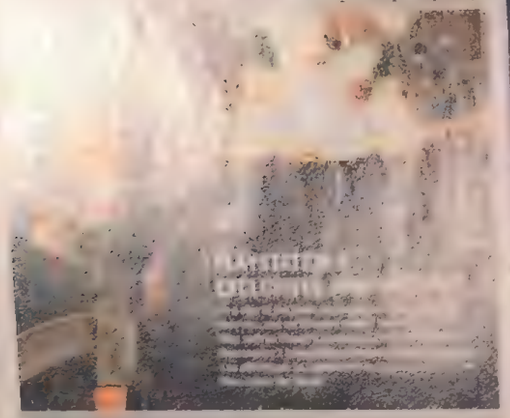
LOOSE TALK

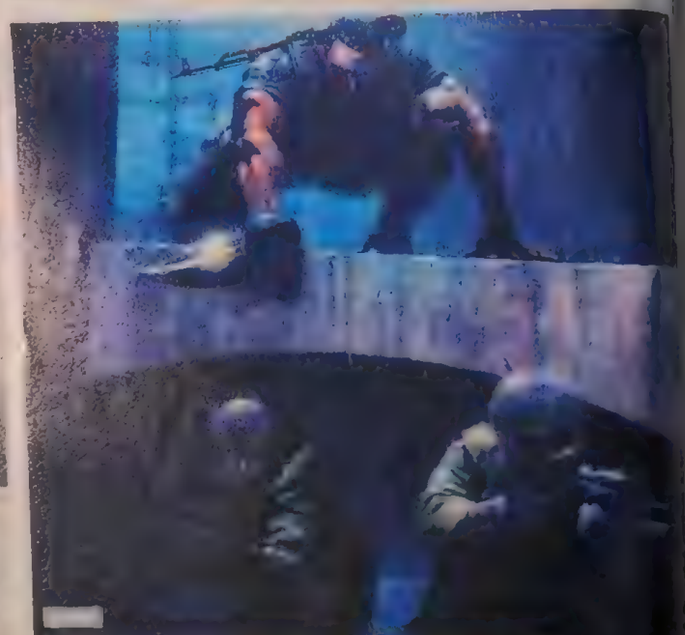
Hot Gaming Gossip

THE HEAT IS ON

GEARBOX SIGNS ON FOR DENIRO MOVIE

M [illegible] ult classic not only for its iconic bank heist shoot[illegible] brilliant ensemble cast including Rob[illegible] Studio (Brothers in Arms) has [illegible] gen video game due out in 2007 [illegible] such as DeNiro, Pacino, and





THE CIPHER COMPLEX

NEW PS3 TITLE FROM EDGE OF REALITY

Austin developer Edge of Reality is working on a new action title for the PlayStation 3. [illegible] using its experience with a wide range of titles (everything from the Tony Hawk series [illegible] to the console versions of The Sims) to see it forward on this new [illegible] Cipher Complex.

Although the developer has yet to sign on with a publisher, president Binu Philip [illegible] Informer that it's all part of the plan. "We don't want a publisher involved in the [illegible] until it's really rock solid." The company would rather be free to create the game around its vision instead of a publisher stepping in and backing an a license or taking over the process. As for the game, the developer is excited to be tackling the PS3. Edge of Reality's creative director Thomas Coles told us, "You want to make sure you target the platform that is the [illegible] one to develop for." We hope to see the results of the company's work in the [illegible]

NAME THAT GAME

Test Your Sight

"ID SOFTWARE NEVER WOUND UP DOING A FANTASY GAME"

JOHN CARMACK ON HIS MOBILE GAME ORCS & ELVES

id Software's John Carmack has long been known for his work at the forefront of gaming technology. With last year's release of Doom RPG for cell phones, however, Carmack has shown he is equally adroit at games of a smaller scale. Now with his newest cell phone title – Orcs & Elves – Carmack is showing that his interest in this rising type of gaming isn't a passing fad. We talked to him about the game and other topics in our exclusive interview.

Tell us about how Orcs & Elves came about.

[illegible] Doom RPG, it was obvious that somebody had [illegible] fantasy game. The games I used to play when I was [illegible] were like Wizardry and Ultima and Bard's Tale and [illegible] that. And id Software never wound up doing a fantasy [illegible] When Orcs & Elves was started, we got to take everything [illegible] good about Doom RPG and then go ahead and lay [illegible] bunch of really good new ideas on there and try it [illegible] There are like a dozen new things that happen in there, [illegible] level has an interesting hook. [illegible] water that rises, walls that move [illegible] and reconfigure, and there are [illegible] things that happen at the end [illegible] game. Hidden within the game [illegible] a lot of lore, and we're expecting [illegible] game that has sequels and [illegible] products and things like that.

Can having a good game on a cell phone overcome the fact that playing games on your phone isn't always the best experience?

A [illegible] and a half ago, when I started [illegible] Doom RPG, I made a comment [illegible] you really can't do an immersive [illegible] on a cell phone, but I pretty [illegible] have to retract that. With Orcs & [illegible] we saw so many people sit there [illegible] playtesting it and they'd be [illegible] absorbed in this little two inch [illegible] and I'd walk by the playtesting [illegible] and see them there. Three hours later, I'd walk by and [illegible] still be sitting there. That's immersion [laughs]

Have you ever challenged other developers to try and do something with cell phone gaming?

A [illegible] they look at me a little funny, and it's like 'Why [illegible] doing mobile games?' A lot of people don't really get it, [illegible] they think that I'm all about pushing the highest end [illegible] technology. But that's not really the motivation factor. For [illegible] engineering is about trying to do something good with [illegible] resources. I almost like the low cost aspect of it too [illegible] if you buy a $50 or $60 game, it almost has to be a life-[illegible] decision for people. To me, that's almost getting away from what playing games is about. I come from an old arcade games sort of background, and that's what I think about games, not something I'm going to devote my life to for the next six months.

Does your inspiration ever flow from your work on the mobile space up to what you might do for the PC?

I've got not so much of a plan but a hope. What you see now is everything flowing downhill. Where if somebody has a hit for the console, they'll make some little scaled down cell phone version of that. But I think there's actually potential for it to go the other way. If Orcs & Elves is very successful, and a million people download it and play it like that, we can look at that and go, 'Well, it's already got an accepted fan base here, maybe we can graduate that to the PC or console space, or intermediately the PSP or something.' If it works out that way, that has great implications for people willing to try out new franchises and ideas on the cheapest development platform, and then when it's proven to a degree, roll it into the more expensive-to-develop-for platforms. So, I'm kind of crossing my fingers and hoping that can work out there, because that would be a really positive thing for the game industry in general.

Last time we talked to you, you said that developing for the Xbox 360 was better than working with the PS3. Has that changed at all?

No, that's still the same. Sony's a hardware company, Microsoft's a software company, and you can really tell in the difference in what the development tool chain is set up for. Now, PS2 eventually got to have really nice development tools, but it wasn't because of Sony. It was because of other third-party companies that did understand that. And right now, all the tools for the PS3 are essentially coming from Sony, and they are not that good. The hardware is plenty powerful and it's gonna be a little more powerful than the 360. But in terms of what you're gonna get out of games on there, the 360's easier to develop for and essentially they are close enough that the hardware isn't going to matter.

What's your opinion on the fact that more people have licensed the Unreal Engine 3 than your Doom 3 engine?

There's money to be made there. But I'm certainly not interested in doing a lot of hand holding. I've always been in the case where it's, 'Take it or leave it. There's what we got, because I'm not interested in becoming this tiny little person atop this mega-stroke pyramid of a company. I have a main programmer who often says, 'We should put this in.' And I'll say, 'What do we need that for?' And he'll say, 'Well, it will be good for licensees.' And I'll say, 'That's not good enough of a reason.' We need to concentrate on what's good for us first and foremost.

Do you still plan on id not handling the next Doom?

We have no plans on doing any of our follow-up sequels ourselves. We have a Wolfenstein sequel right now, and Enemy Territory: Quake Wars, but there's no Doom title right now. But it will unquestionably happen at some point.

TOP FIVES

Favorites From Industry Pros And GI Readers

CAMERON BROWN
Director, Pandemic Studios (Mercenaries 2)

1 Virtua Fighter 4: Evolution – Arcade
2 Paradroid – Commodore 64
3 Quake 2 CTF – PC
4 NIGHTS into Dreams – Saturn
5 The Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask – N64

ANTHONY KIM
Ridgefield, New Jersey

1 Final Fantasy X – PS2
2 Kingdom Hearts II – PS2
3 Super Smash Bros. Melee – GC
4 Mario Tennis – N64
5 Halo – Xbox

Send Top Fives and a photo of yourself to
Game Informer Magazine/Top Five
724 N 1st St 4th Fl
[illegible]
[illegible]com
subject: digital picture

TOP TEN

Lists...Everybody Loves Lists...

Top 10 Rumors About The PS3

10 All games will contain giant enemy crabs
9 It will turn you into a robot, like that one from Superman III
8 The high price point is due to the diamond encrusted, Kobe beef, one of the [illegible]
7 Will come packaged with a Crosley, starring Joe Jennifer Tilly and Nick Lachey
6 Controller is so fast voice capable only says "Ten-you-Ah-tendo"
5 Intuitive sense of upper crust quality games will cost $99 each
4 Does not need to be plugged in. Powered solely by Metal Gear Solid 4
3 [illegible]
2 Blu-ray and multiplatform are basically the same thing
1 Totally worth it

Name That Game Answer: [illegible]

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

Infiltration

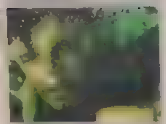
[illegible]

Solid Snake Hatches

Metal Gear, the first game directed by Kojima [illegible] Japanese MSX2 computer [illegible]

A Forgotten Classic

Flashback



Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater [illegible]

A Unified Front

Kojima's team at Konami Computer Entertainment Japan officially becomes Kojima Productions. In [illegible] administrative tasks, Kojima is back [illegible] creative role at the company.

HIDEOKOJIMA

KONAMI DIGITAL ENTERTAINMENT [illegible]

>> Very few individuals have the ability to captivate an audience like Hideo Kojima. As the creator of the legendary Metal Gear franchise, Kojima's games are known for blending intense high-action gameplay with sophisticated philosophical themes. We had a chance to sit down and speak with Mr. Kojima about the upcoming console war, games as an art form, and the future of the legendary Solid Snake. <<

The issue of whether games can be considered an art form is a hot topic in the industry right now and your games frequently figure into the discussion. Do you think that games are art or just entertainment?

[illegible]

I don't think there is a danger to expanding [illegible] the population of people who [illegible]

We've seen Japanese companies like Konami and Square Enix promising major support for the PS3, while western developers like BioWare and Lionhead are working mainly with 360. In addition to being about hardware, does the upcoming console war have an element of eastern games versus western ones?

[illegible] 360. This is just a fact based on the market situa[illegible] that we have already lost. The Japanese creators have lost to the European and American creators. Therefore, I always say to my staff, "Don't look at the Japanese creators. Look toward the Europeans [illegible] development or technical things."

[illegible] you talk about the war between Japanese developers [illegible] those overseas, I acknowledge [illegible] we have already lost.

[illegible] In the near future, since there are so many great [illegible] developers, publishers [illegible]

For the next generation, many gamers are anticipating entries in familiar franchises like Halo, Mario, and MGS. Does this shrink the space available for original IPs?

That's really [illegible] want to create somethi[illegible]

You have said before that Metal Gear Solid and the PlayStation brand are very closely intertwined. Do you have any interest in pursuing development for the Wii or the 360?

Of course. For Wii, I really want to do it. The biggest stress or disappointment I have now is that I can't work on new things on Wii right away, but I have MGS 4 and MGS: Portable Ops that I have to finish. When I went to [illegible] came up to me and said "Aren't you creating for the Wii?" And I said, "Yes, I really want to, but I can't."

All three of the hardware manufacturers have made it a goal to draw in more types of gamers. If more novice and casual gamers come into the fold, do you see a danger of games becoming overly simplistic?

As a Japanese developer, what do you think about Microsoft's strategy for penetrating the Japanese market?

Of course, the approach is not a mistake but that's probably only the truth for the next two years or so. In Japan, Hollywood movies are [illegible]

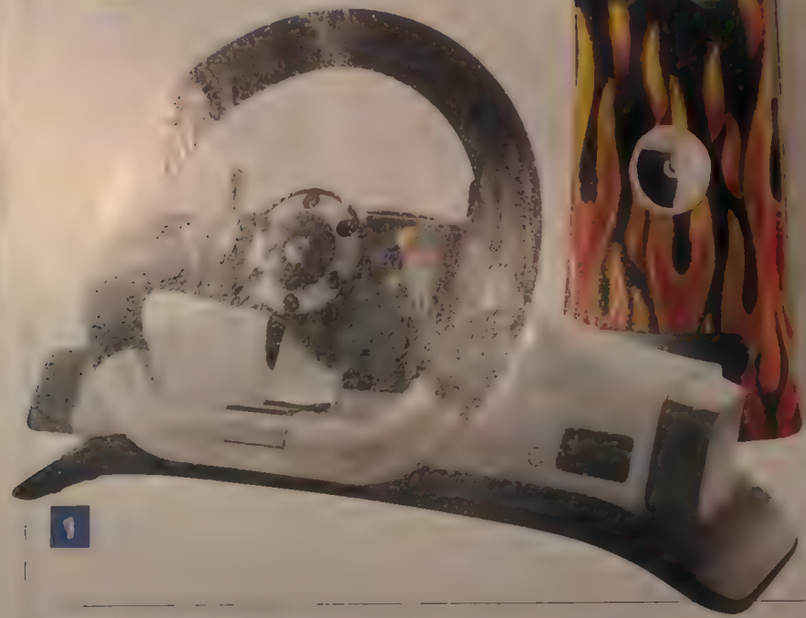
Solid Snake is an industry icon. If he ends up dying in MGS 4 as the E3 trailer implies it could be the first time that a true gaming legend has been killed off. Do you have any reservations about doing that?

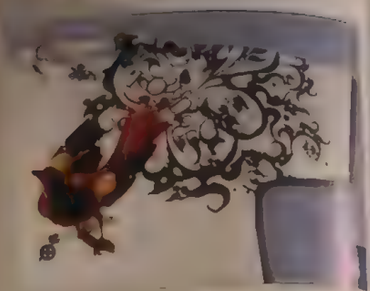
Well, I'm not sure if he's really going to die. If he is going to die, I am the only person who [illegible] make that possible. Even the team members [illegible] afraid to kill Snake. If I decide to end [illegible] people will understand, but I have the respons[illegible] to be the one to [illegible]

KONAMI'S MASTER STORYTELLER

Hideo Kojima's groundbreaking Metal Gear series celebrates its 20th anniversary in 2007 with the release of the latest chapter, Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns of the Patriots

THE GEAR OF E3





1

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6

1 XBOX 360 WIRELESS RACING WHEEL

Microsoft | www.xbox.com | TBA

HD DVD player. Microsoft tro
that's due out in the fall of this year

2 GAME FACE FOR XBOX 360

Nyko Technologie | www.nyko.com | $19.99

With refill packs coming out this summer, Nyko's print-your-own faceplate kit could be just the deal for gamers that

3 EDOC LAUNDRY

Edoc Laundry | www.edoclaundry.com

around $32 (shirts), $4 - $60 (accessories)

Wear the clothes and solve a mystery at the same

4 PHYSX 128 MB PHYSICS CARD

Ageia Technologies

www.ageia.com | $299.99

5 G3 LASER MOUSE

Logitech | www.logitech.com | $59.99

An entry-level gaming mouse with ambidextrous desig
G3 is a great cost-efficient way to get features like ad
resolutions and Logitech's sweet laser-tracking tec

6 FANG COMBAT PAD

Ideazon Inc. | www.zboard.com | $34.99

Designed to work with rights or lefties, the Fang pa
41 programmable keys at the fingertips of FPS, MM

ALKYRIE PROFILE TRADING ARTS

Manufacturer: Square Enix **Website:** www.square-enix.com **List Price:** $5.99/each

Square Enix consistently offers great character designs. While their Final Fantasy
series has always gotten high-quality merchandise, now the publisher
spreading the love to a franchise with a new lease on life – Valkyrie Profile. This
collection of six painted PVC figures will be out in Japan this July, and although
U.S. release isn't confirmed, importing will certainly be an option

DESKSAVER KEYBOARD

Manufacturer
Website List Price

HALF-LIFE 2 HEADCRAB COLLECTIBLE

Manufacturer
Website
List Price

JOGGER JUMP SNEAKERS

Manufacturer
Website: www.stevemadden.com **List Price:** $69.95

Besides these being totally wearable sneakers, the big news

PINBALL MACHINE

Manufacturer: Zizzle
Website: www.zizzle.com
List Price: $300

These mini pinball machines have big features like real solenoid flippers, ramps, and multiple levels. The plan is to release one for Pirates of the Caribbean and another for Marvel Super Heroes. While they aren't as flashy as the machines that drew quarters directly from our souls in the arcades of yore, this could be a great compromise for getting some of that arcade feel into a real living room.

A LIKELY STORY:

THE RPG RECYCLING EPIDEMIC

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
MAGAZINE

[illegible] equivalents in RPGs all the time. The dutiful princess. The wise mentor. The absent or [illegible] father. It's not enough to just give players an excuse to wield a sword and kill a monster [illegible] we need context, and that isn't provided by [illegible]-cutter characters lifted straight from the anime du jour. Is it too much to ask for some imagination?

This isn't a call for RPG stories to be outrageously zany or bizarre. Games like Shadow Hearts: The New World push the boundaries of what is tolerable on that front. But there are some out there that deserve credit for trying something different. For instance, Shin Megami Tensei features complex and mature-themed [illegible] love Xenosaga's epic and philosophical [illegible] every one of these, there are twice as many [illegible] of... " games that are tragically stuck in the [illegible]

Here's the part of the editorial where I propose a solution – a plan for sweeping [illegible] that will make all RPGs unique and surprising adventures – but I can't. There isn't a simple [illegible] The genre is entrenched in Japan (where [illegible] skip work to wait in line for the latest [illegible] Quest), and I realize that no one is earning [illegible] with a formula that works from a sales [illegible]tive. Hell, I'm even a part of that formula, I'm guilty of buying RPGs that are not revolutionary. I [illegible] them for what they are, but every time [illegible] "new game" and start in a rural village [illegible] by a faceless evil empire, I can't help [illegible] how the genre is holding itself back. [illegible] developers who are reading this. As gamers [illegible] are eager to venture into new territory. With an intense focus on characters and narrative [illegible] are in a position to define the medium [illegible] potential. Please take advantage of it. ■■■

through the [illegible] playing to [illegible] will his village be burned down [illegible] be really huge or just pretty huge? Will his sidekick be a spunky girl or a stoic mercenary? Is the villain seaching for ultimate power or, well, I guess that's really the only [illegible] there. While these

Trying to create amazing moments like these using worn-out story material is like trying to paint a masterpiece using ClipArt. Those stock images on office memos are never engaging or impres-

> The narratives aren't changing – the pieces within them are just being swapped.

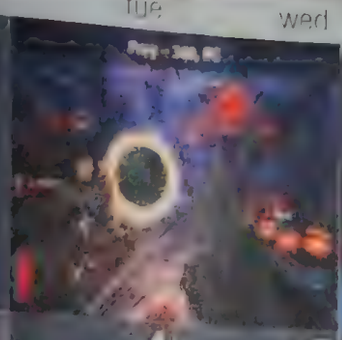
The views and opinions expressed on this page are those of the author and not necessarily those of Game Informer Magazine.

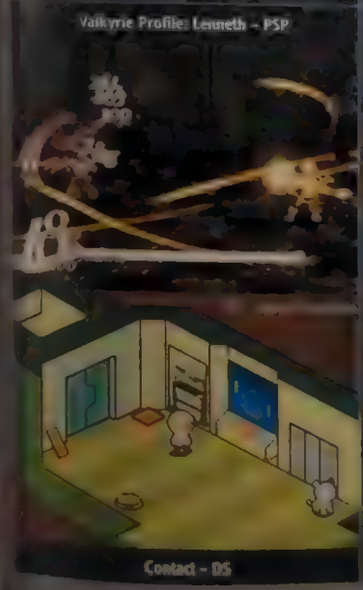
[illegible] are your opinion, contact senior editor Matt Helgeson at matt@game-informer.com

july

sun mon tue wed thur

Valkyrie Profile: Lenneth – PSP





Contact – DS

4

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7

9

11

NEW RELEASES
- Prey – 360, PC
- Super Monkey Ball Adventure – PS2, GC, PSP
- Vanguard: Saga of Heroes – PC

12

HALO GRAPHIC NOVEL

[illegible]

14

[illegible] which is based on the Japanese horror film [illegible], proves the silver screen today. It's good to see that Gollum is still getting work.

18

NEW RELEASES
- The Art Bully – PS2, GC, GBA
- Blade Dancer – PSP
- Nearne Vice – PSP
- Valkyrie Profile: Lenneth – PSP

19

THE ADVENTURES OF BRISCO COUNTY JR

Remember those days when gas prices didn't lead to house attacks and Blossom's being sold? If you do, then you probably remember a show that stood head and shoulders above all others. This show was Brisco County Jr., and it's finally coming to DVD. [illegible] Lord [illegible] of the [illegible] series is now [illegible]

21

Named director M. Night Shyamalan's [illegible] Lady in the Water [illegible] movie lovers today. Here's the [illegible] – [illegible] a great super hero [illegible] who's allergic to water.

25

NEW RELEASES
- [illegible]
- Prey & the Gun

Blade Dancer – PSP

Game chants 'We rock 88 series'

Electronic Arts is the victim of its own success. The company is the number one third-party publisher, and has become so due to a stable of franchises that perpetuate themselves yearly and keep people coming back for more. But there is the growing feeling among gamers and even within the industry that this gravy train of iteration cannot continue indefinitely.

Of course, EA (or any other company for that matter) is not going to just stop long-running franchises such as Need for Speed in their tracks. Instead, Need for Speed Carbon executive producer Larry LaPierre and his development team at EA Black Box in Vancouver have the altogether harder task of confounding people's expectations.

During our time with LaPierre, we learned that he is an engaging person who is quick to talk to you about any aspect of video games – from the nuances of the business to the intricacies of development and the mysteries of what makes gameplay fun. Getting to the heart of why Need for Speed Carbon was going

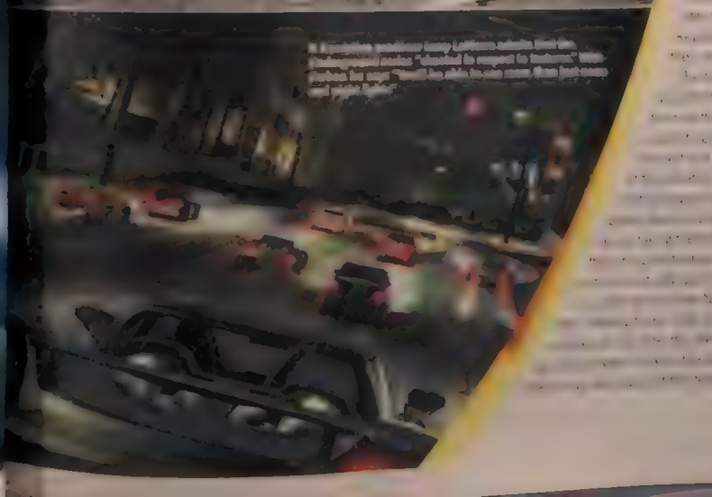
TUNING FOR SPEED

to be more than another racing title, LaPierre asks himself and his development team, "What are you going to do that's different? We do all sorts of surveys and focus tests and all that, and we get a great sense of what people enjoy and what they didn't enjoy, etc. But if you went through that and literally made the game that they are saying they want the next game to be, you are not going to succeed."

Having the ability to not only question every element of Need for Speed Carbon up until this point, but the conviction to steer the project straight, are qualities that have already served LaPierre and his team well throughout the whole development process. When they were faced with a tough decision or things just didn't feel right, LaPierre was able to make an honest assessment and remind himself, "You have to go somewhere where they are not expecting you to go."

The adoption of a new moniker for this Need for Speed is telling. "This isn't Most Wanted 2. That'll be good news to some people and bad news to others. That's the decision we made and I stand by that," explains LaPierre. "This [version] is more about racing. The franchise has reinvented itself in the past, and Carbon not only does that but it also combines different racing concepts into a more comprehensive world.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26 >>



Teammates like the Blocker will help pave your way to victory.

"IF IT'S NOT MOST WANTED THAT'LL BE GOOD NEWS TO SOME PEOPLE AND BAD NEWS TO OTHERS. THAT'S THE DECISION WE MADE AND I STAND BY THAT."

– Larry LaPierre
executive producer

the most valuable of these is the Fixer – a behind-the-scenes influence who can swing all kinds of deals. Is the heat getting to [illegible] o it that the cops back off a litt[illegible]

[illegible] ame, however, is that [illegible] but your job is to leave [illegible] – it's nothing personal. LaPierre [illegible] component of the game was more [illegible] LaPierre stepped back, looked [illegible] nging the core of the game [illegible] the game in that you were trying [illegible] nching the racing. And your mind [illegible] t. Where's that Blocker guy? It w[illegible]

[illegible] rbon's foundation of re[illegible] While we raced thro[illegible] teammate and when to use [illegible] n we did use them didn't seem overt[illegible] they are added to the game, making intera[illegible]

[illegible] numbers as flowing and nat[illegible]
[illegible] aspects that players will be able [illegible]
[illegible] d. "I'm sure you can appre[illegible]
[illegible] d hang our hats on and [illegible]
[illegible] lly appreciate LaPie[illegible]
[illegible] ntribute to pushing Carbon forwar[illegible]
[illegible] pen world format that [illegible]
[illegible] e all over the mar[illegible]
[illegible] back and forth as the game [illegible]

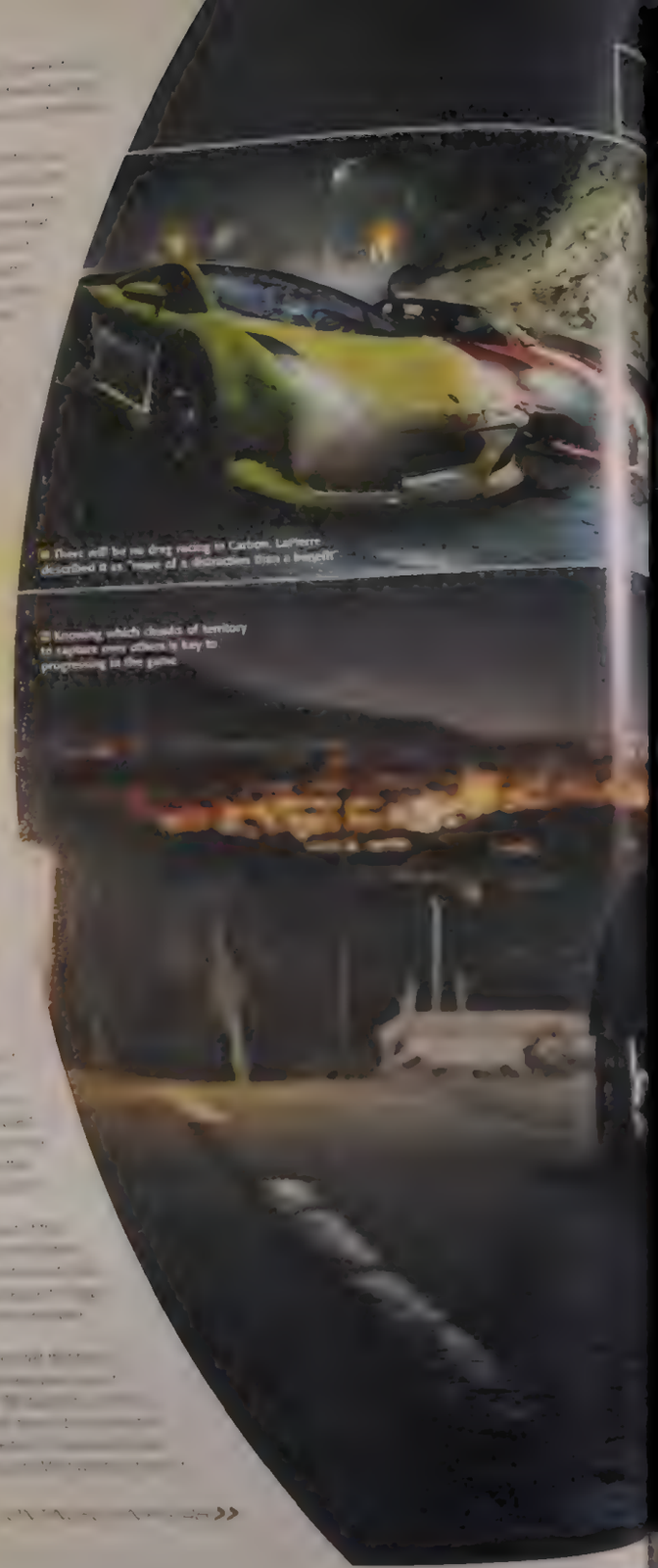
[illegible] YOU CAN APPRECI-
[illegible] DON'T THINK
[illegible] AS MUCH
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible] SU[illegible]

– Larry L. Pie[illegible]

[illegible] d by the fact that certain member[illegible]
[illegible] s will be harder to win than [illegible]
[illegible] in areas (there [illegible]
[illegible] in the corners. On the other hand [illegible]
exotics have the best top speed of them all. Beat the bo[illegible]
get their pre-configured ride for your stable.

Of course, performing your own customizations on yo[illegible]
Need for Speed, and Carbon takes it to new heights [illegible]
to Tiger Woods' dynamic face editor, through sliders [illegible]
you put on your car in real time. Tying back to the gam[illegible]
two Fabricators to your crew, you will even unlock a spe[illegible]
your ride.

LaPierre and his team looked at the elements [illegible]
expanded the next-generation foundation that Mos[illegible]
the franchise's open world. But they weren't satisfied. S[illegible]
tactics and crew customization – that was where we were at. It [illegible]
of little pieces. It wasn't sharp; it didn't have that visceralness [illegible]
you go, 'Yeah, that's cool. I like that.'" Hoping to avoid simply offenn[illegible]



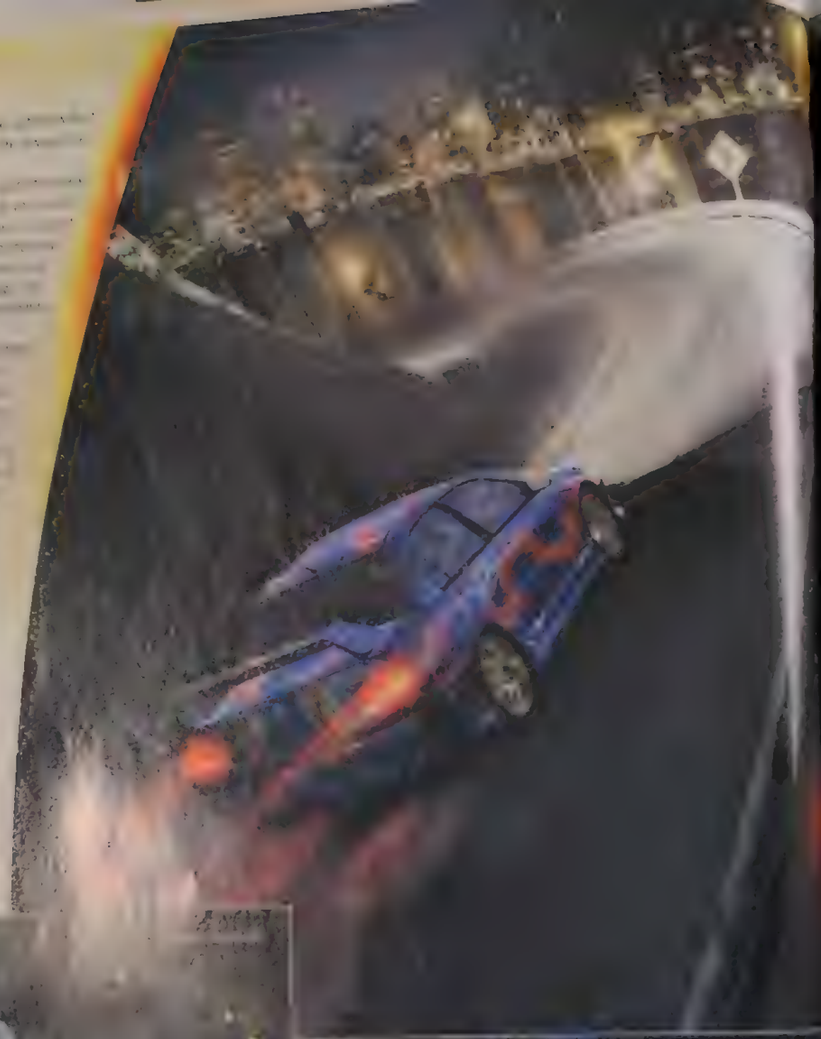
There will be no drag racing in Carbon. LaPierre described it as "more of a distraction than a benefit."

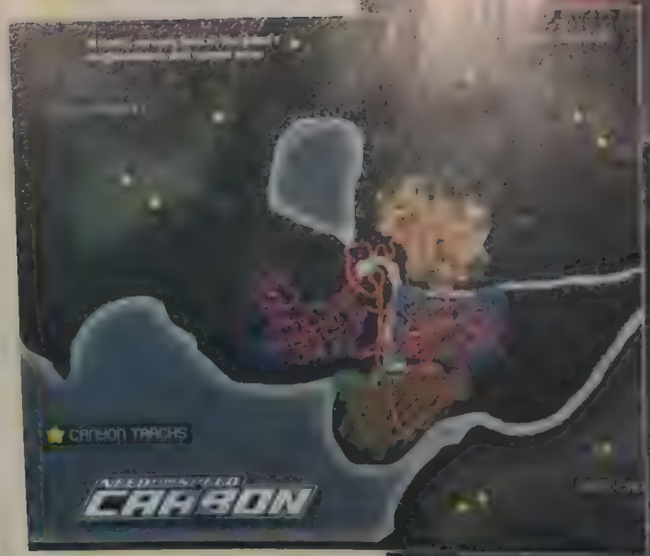
Knowing which chunks of territory to capture and others is key to progressing in the game.

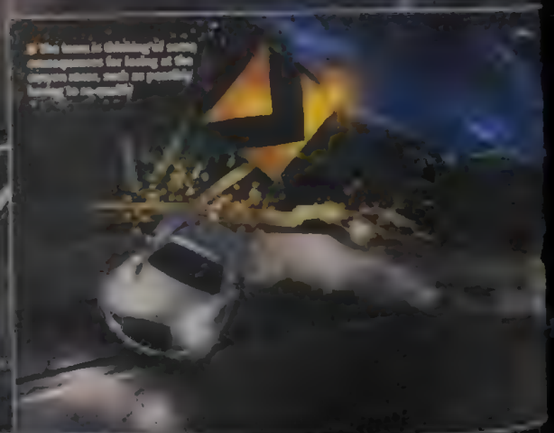
this point that LaPierre pulled onc

that the kids

attentio







enough, th
heart stopping p
battles will take place
allenges and sprint rac
Unfortunate

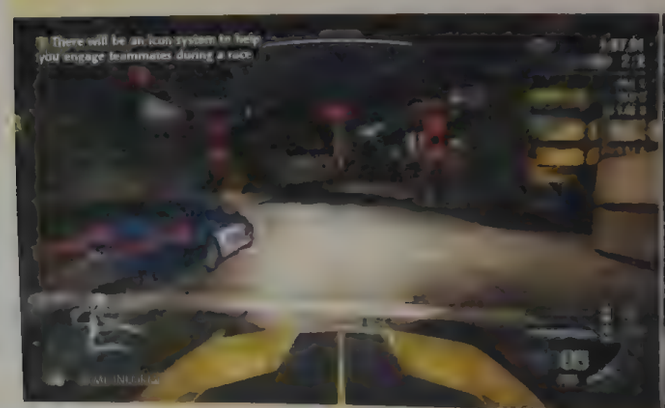
Not all canyon tracks will have barriers keeping you from falling to your death.

"YOU'LL HAVE TO HAVE THAT TV MOMENT WHERE YOU GO 'YEAH, THAT'S COOL. I LIKE THAT.'

– Larry LaPierre

[illegible] online feature set, they've [illegible] for this aspect of the [illegible] see online racing clans [illegible] to the canyon tracks or [illegible] chunks of the virtual map. [illegible] moment are the differences between the versions of the game for each of the different consoles. Support for the new Xbox 360 racing wheel is easily done, but recondling the motion-less nature of the PlayStation 3 and Nintendo Wii still hasn't been worked out to LaPierre's satisfaction. He told us that he's worried about the sensitivity of these controls, and for the Wii in particular, the fatigue factor of having to constantly hold up your arms.

The racing genre is a hard one in which to innovate. For so long the public has thought that the genre was filled with nothing but sim-racers. But racing series like Need for Speed have made it out of gamers who race by the seat of their pants not the spec sheets. By connecting back with the real life pioneers of street racing themselves LaPierre and his team have fulfilled their promise of delivering more than just Most Wanted, instead taking Carbon in a new direction. And from what we know about LaPierre and how he and the team have constantly made decisions for the betterment of the game all during its [illegible] we know that nothing short of a totally high octane experience will be good enough. ■■■



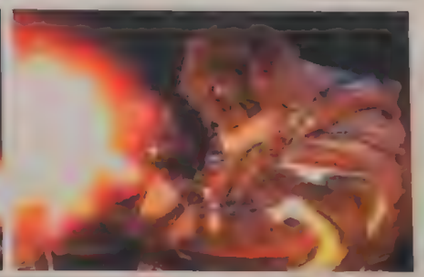
There will be an icon system to help you engage teammates during a race.

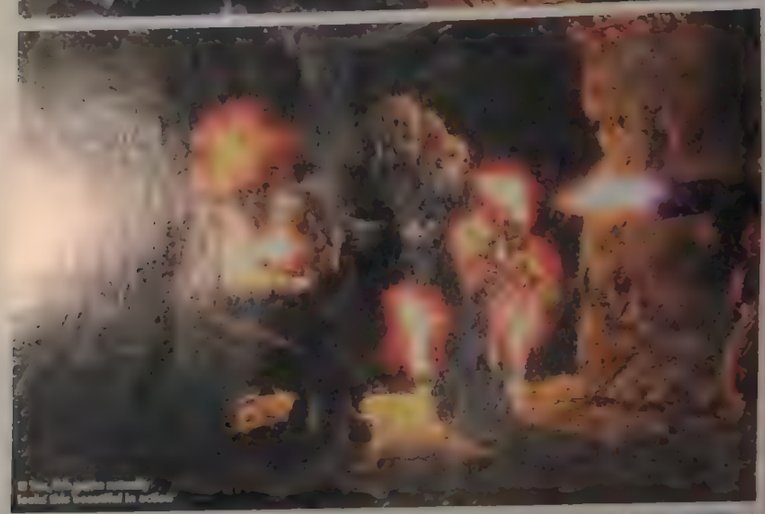
THE E3 HOT 50

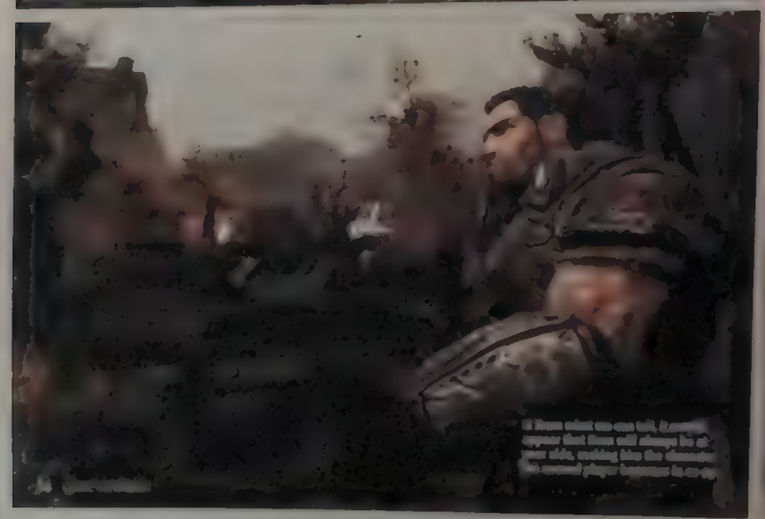
AS YOU NAVIGATE the bright lights and enormous booths of E3, there is one question you will hear repeated endlessly over the roar of the crowd: "What have you seen that's good?" With so many amazing games around every corner, it's a tough question to answer – but we're giving it a try. Here, ranked in order from one to 50, is the very best of what we saw and experienced at E3. These are the games that had people talking, and the ones positioned to define gaming in the coming year and beyond.

Gears of War

H







...ched to the machine gun. Flexing its graphical mu... ...ed in the distance as Fenix pressed forwa... ...ack by back

...stage, Fenix reached a helicopt... ...ety, something huge and na... ...ls of the planet. It lunged toward th... ...ld see what happened next, th... ...you, Cliffy B!

...msoft's E3 booth, we were treated to anoth... ...ne getting our hands on the multiplayer... ...any matches pitted four Locust troop... ...e Coalition of Ordered Government... ...Soldier. The map itself wa... ...seemed to be designed with... ...n a design standpoint... ...through this zone. Some pe... ...others hurried with a... ...safe zone to the next on the m... ...the perimeter, where we found a... ...open. As we learned, most of the... ...little protection and will likely ge... ...you in their field of vision. The battle on... ...like the demo we watched a day ea... ...game. If you leave yourself expo... ...teresingly, when a comrade falls, you hear... ...If you can get to them before they per... but you can imagine how risky of a vent... to fare very well in the multiplayer mat... ...mit that we panicked whenever we hea... ...into action. With a drool-worthy story mode... ...nd a multiplayer experience that just kicks you i... ...ears of War is definitely shaping up to be the r... ...gaming. Emergence Day is coming. Hopefully it... ...ther than later. ■■■

PC

Spore

> **STYLE** 1 PLAYER SIMULATION > **PUBLISHER** ELECTRON... ARTS > **DEVELOPER** MAXIS > **RELEASE**

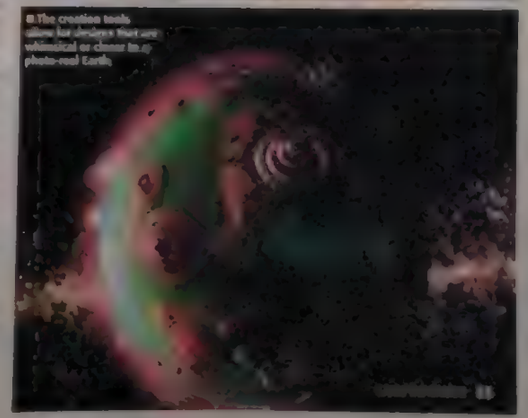
AND ON THE EIGHTH DAY...

Maybe Will Wright is a god. Or maybe Will Wright is making us into gods. After all, the man behind The Sims has been slaving away at the tools any deity would have been jealous to use when fixing up this plane of existence we call home. Concepts and solutions that science and religion have been trying to explain since man learned to make fire seem almost, well, simple when Mr. Wright sits down and shows you how to make them work.

The basic gameplay of Spore has been discussed in these pages before – create a creature, watch it evolve, develop a society, and explore the galaxy. What we saw at E3 wasn't a rehash of those ideas, but instead some examples of how it actually works in the game, demonstrated by Will himself.

...making a new species ...had worked through the steps of this particular animal hundreds of times, but the methods looked surprisingly intuitive, almost as if a master sculptor could see into ... Amorphous balls are stretched and prodded by moving their spines. Arms and legs can be attached anywhere and are animated based on the total structure. Different eyes offer boosts to certain statistics. Mouth shape and size dictate the kind of diet required. When different skins are selected, the engine ... the top and what ... melting and ... Deep rumbling below ... the week of E3, ... was minds blowing every ... Demonstration room.

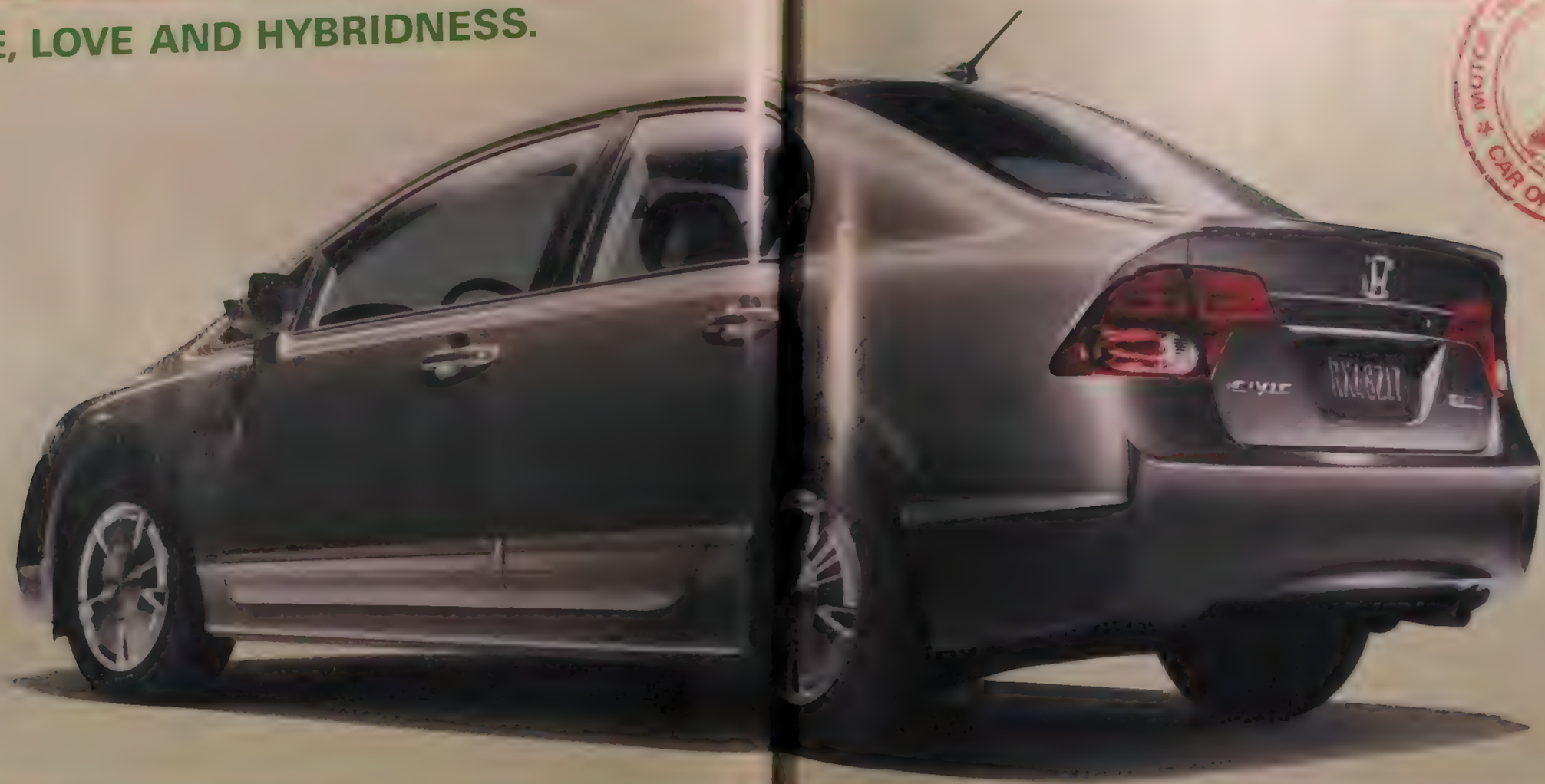
Spouting off phrases like ... side notes. Wright showed ... a burgeoning society, the ... and a first encounter with ... another Spore player wi... and item in your game ... mation will be av... this fair warning. Running ... by "Joe Juba The Awesome ... nothing short of ... models and designs of ... imported into your galaxy ... technologies, and mood ... demonstration, it only took some fireworks ... the new species to worship Wright's alien ... as a god, C-3PO style – it seems that even ... created constructs quickly recognize when they ... in the presence of a highe... Wright and his team are given ... the same effect. ■■■



The creation tools allow for aliens that are whimsical or closer to a photo-real Earth.

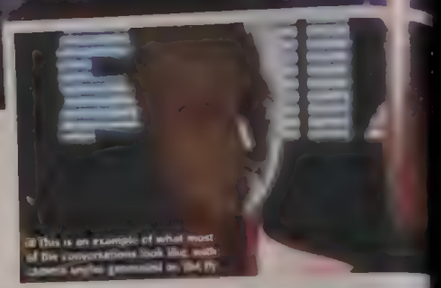
CIVIC

PEACE, LOVE AND HYBRIDNESS.



HYBRID

The all-new 50-mpg Civic Hybrid from Honda. It'll reverse your thinking.



This is an example of what most of the conversations look like, with camera angles generated on the fly.

Mass Effect

> PUBLISHER > DEVELOPER > RELEASE

IT'S ALL IN THE DETAILS

0

The game's universe offers literally thousands of locations, from full-featured planets to abandoned ships. More are promised as downloadable content after the game's launch.

4 Super Mario Galaxy

> STYLE 1-OR 2-PLAYER ACTION/PLATFORM > PUBLISHER NINTENDO
> DEVELOPER NINTENDO > RELEASE 2007

MARWIIO WULES

A

you have to point the remote to tell Mario where to go? Would you have to flick the remote to make Mario jump? Lay your fears to rest. Super Mario Galaxy plays exactly like the Mario titles of old. The analog stick handles Mario's movement, A button jumps, Z centers the camera, and B is used for various interactions like grabbing items. The remote simply adds another layer of interaction to the game. At all times, Mario has a little star cursor traveling with him that follows the movements of the remote when it is pointed at the screen. If the cursor highlights a star icon and the player hits the A button, Mario will be pulled toward the star. As you can image, you'll need to point and click quickly to navigate a series of these chal- [illegible] him traveling to another [illegible]. Interestingly, most of the planets in the game are miniscule in size, allowing players to explore the entire terrain in seconds. Because of this, most stages are comprised of multiple worlds.

We've been waiting for a follow-up to Mario Sunshine for quite some time, and this one seems to be taking the series to a bold new frontier of gaming. Sadly, creator Shigeru Miyamoto stated that Super Mario Galaxy will likely miss the system's launch, but should be available within the first six months of the machine's release. ■■■

Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns of the Patriots

> STYLE 1-PLAYER ACTION > PUBLISHER [illegible] > DEVELOPER [illegible] > RELEASE

THE BIG GOODBYE

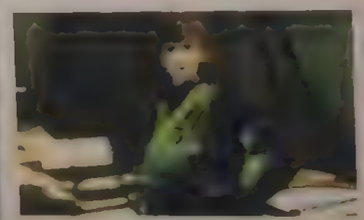
N

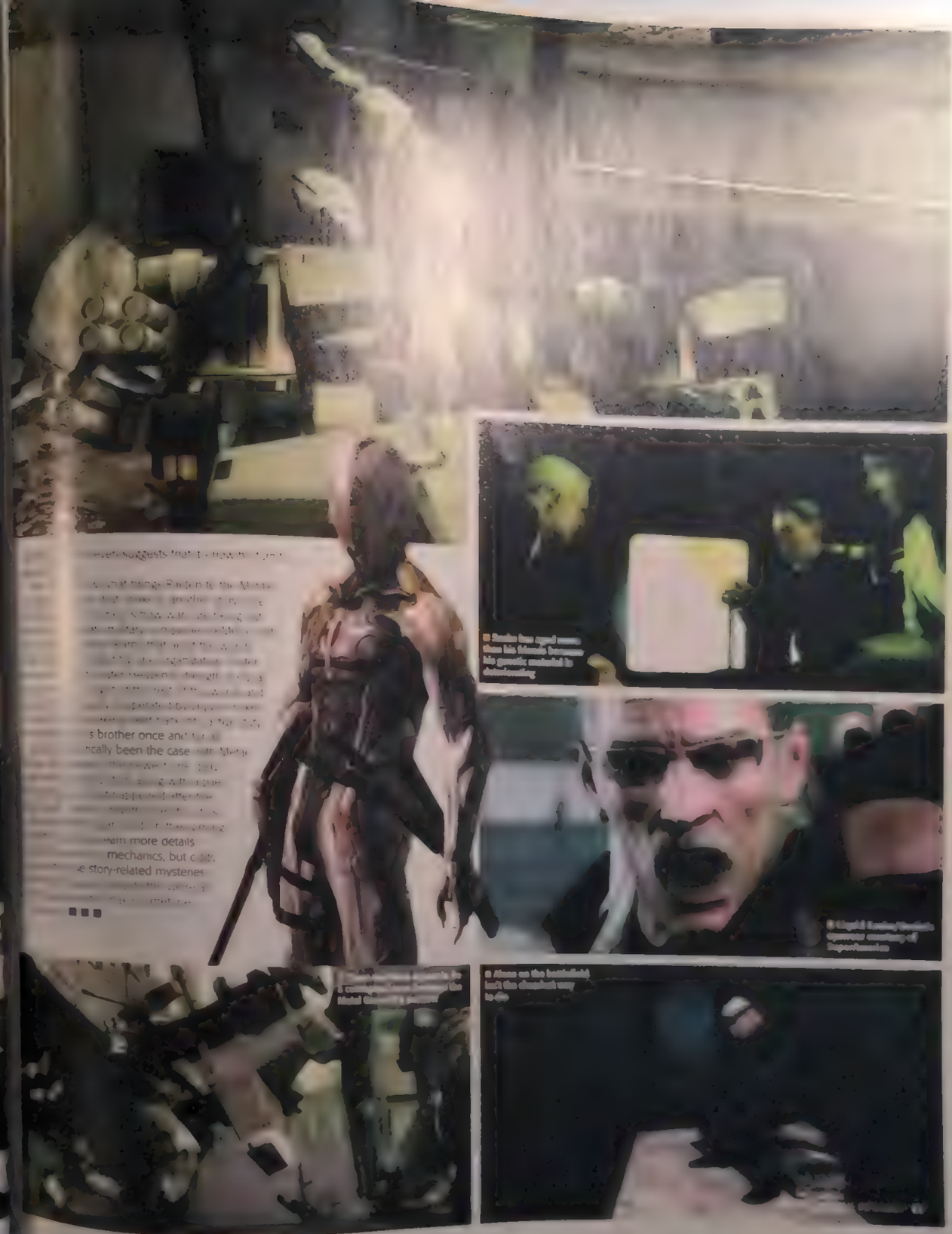
[illegible] suggests that [illegible]

[illegible] brother once and [illegible] [illegible]ically been the case [illegible]

[illegible] learn more details [illegible] mechanics, but [illegible] [illegible] story-related mysteries [illegible]

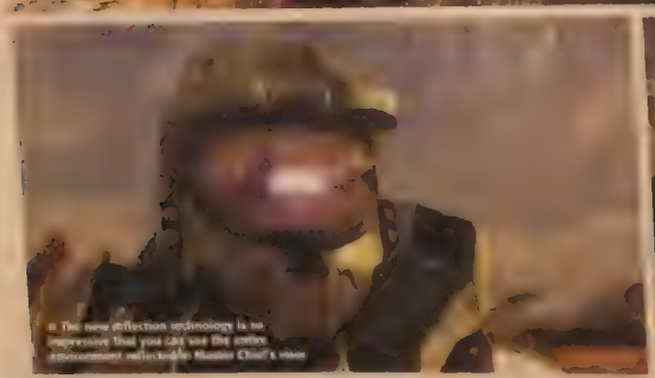
■■■





Shades has signal towers that his friends because his genetic material is deteriorating

Alone on the battlefield, Jack the Ripper's way to die



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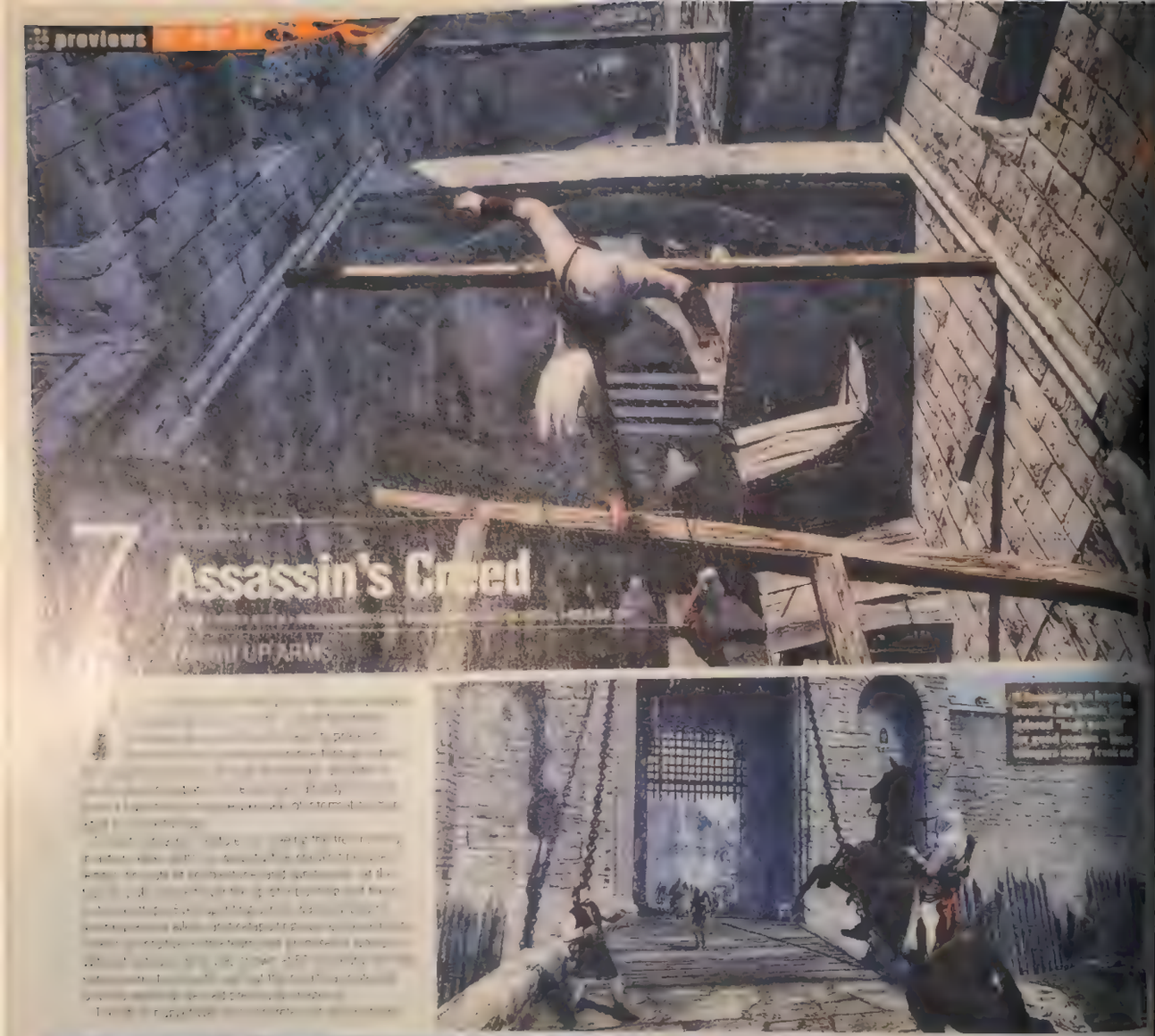
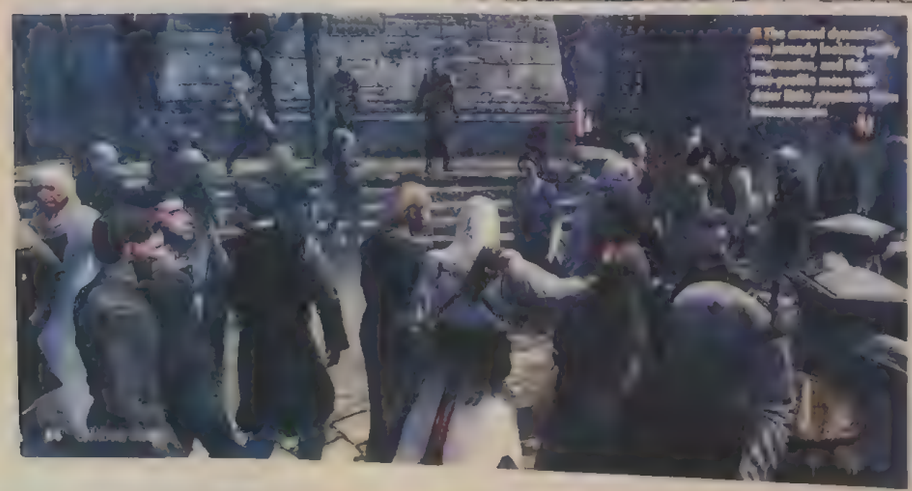
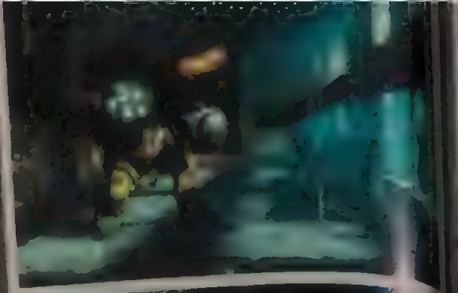


7 Assassin's Creed



After [illegible] from missing a jump or losing a fight, guards are shown an unexpected [illegible] what appears to be a first-person perspective. Decidedly modern-looking people at development surround the player as they [illegible] in what appears to be a [illegible] [illegible], the team dismisses any questions about this, but we do know that they have [illegible] a tale that encompasses "a very long time." We spoke about it a bit in last month's [illegible] story, but suffice it to say that the [illegible] promises an interesting angle for [illegible].

There's no doubt that Assassin's Creed [illegible] splash at E3 this year, and it's no [illegible] to anyone who's seen it. Even in a [illegible] packed with amazing games, this adventure title has the pedigree and gameplay [illegible] mouths watering. ■■■



BioShock

> PUBLISHER > DEVELOPER > RELEASE

CREEPY IN A GOOD WAY

The sensation of constantly being pressed in by the ocean walls reach to the audience

The other environments may not be as impressive as the jungles, but they're still slouch

PC

Crysis

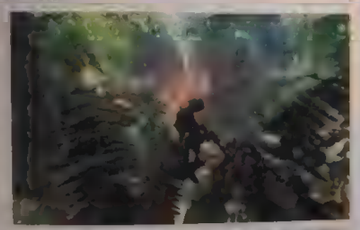
> STYLE > DEVELOPER > RELEASE

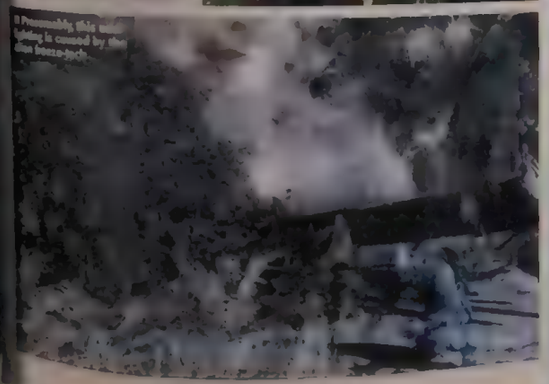
COLD AS ICE

has long been blowing minds with unbelievable shots, but the game looked better running live at E3. gantic space crab robot gun-carriers and breathing thing that threatens it's breathing it firsthand and the beast is another developer Crytek is able CryEngine 2 are truly

of Crysis that we were able

actions – comes true, this is going to be an





Presumably, this water taking is caused by the bazooka

10 Supreme Commander

TOTAL REVOLUTION

(the man behind Total Annihilation) and Gas Powered Games aren't satisfied with formula, though. Supreme Commander is as close to a total reinvention of a beloved genre as we've ever seen.

This title's most-lauded feature – being able to zoom all the way out to see the entire map in the main view – is a cool idea, but what does it really add to gameplay? We saw it in action, and it's much more than a neat toy. From this holistic view, you can see where your battle groups are and where they're going, as well as change their attack and patrol paths through an easy and intuitive point-and-click interface.

be engaging in. The gameplay that we saw had literally hundreds of units of all descriptions mixing it up in three different simultaneous battles.

The sheer scale of Supreme Commander, from the enormous war machines at your disposal to the scope of the combats that break out and the huge maps that wars are fought on, is like nothing we've ever seen before. We'll have to re-learn everything we think we know about RTS when this comes out next year, but that's the kind of learning that we don't mind too much.

For reference, each of these pixel-thick is time in three times as tall as an Infinitypede

11

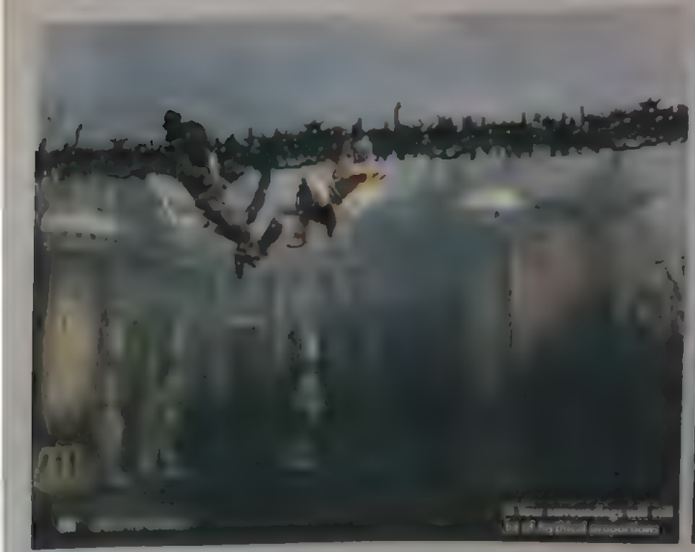
God of War II

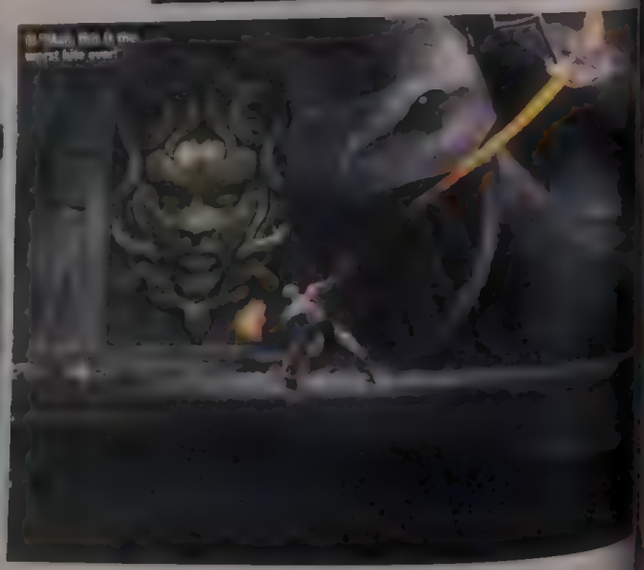
> STYLE > PUBLISHER SCEA > DEVELOPER > RELEASE

ANGER MANAGEMENT

[illegible] it's packed [illegible] changed a [illegible] generation hard- [illegible] around the corner, this [illegible] last year's action hit remains one of the [illegible] times in the industry. It may not be [illegible] a vast array of new features, but it promises [illegible] more of what they loved in the first [illegible] addition to the features we've outlined [illegible] hanging from walls and swinging from [illegible] blades), the big news is that Kratos can now [illegible] ra[illegible] a new array [illegible] bosses), and e[illegible] facet of the ga[illegible] few of the [illegible] der dash [illegible] access), [illegible] will players finally be a[illegible] ness he secretly [illegible] t. But they'll be able to kill a who[illegible] which is almost as fulfilling ■■■

Many of Kratos' basic attacks are the same, but his advanced moves have been revamped.





12

PC

World of Warcraft: The Burning Cru[illegible]

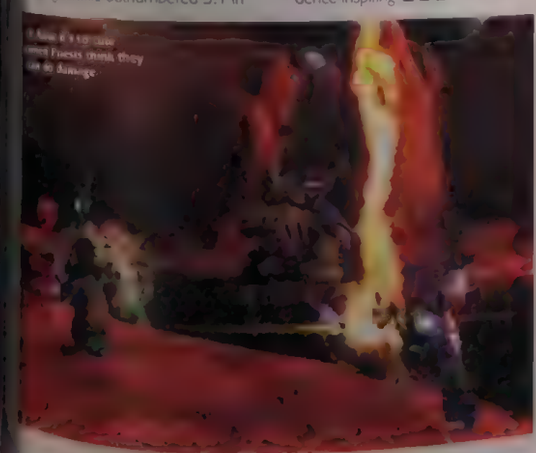
> STYLE MASSIVELY MU[illegible] > PUBLISHER BLIZZARD [illegible] > DEVELO[illegible] ENTERTAINMENT > RELEASE [illegible]

NERF DEATHCOIL

C[illegible]ts about the rela- [illegible]er level of Warlocks [illegible]e Burning Crusade [illegible]g up to be nearly [illegible]r WoW-obsessed [illegible]r. The recently- [illegible] Alliance race, [illegible] cool enough to be [illegible] Blizzard has big [illegible]ers who choose not [illegible]e massive 40-man [illegible]nteresting to do [illegible]ngeons designed [illegible]20 heroes. And, at [illegible]orld PvP will have [illegible]

[illegible]d of Outland, in [illegible]ng many instances [illegible] challenges and fat [illegible] feature many different [illegible]bjectives that can be [illegible]r faction. The plan [illegible]n advantages to the [illegible]ls them, from unique [illegible] pecial vendors and cool buffs. If it puts an end to trying to fight while outnumbered 3:1 in the current Bat[illegible] the stupid b[illegible] we're [illegible] ning to revamp the [illegible] Battlegroun[illegible] more team-onente[illegible] alleviate the [illegible] PvPers currently [illegible] to get their rewards.

Of course, there will be [illegible] content available for those [illegible] interest in PvP as well. The [illegible] announced instances [illegible] Hellfire Citadel, as well as the bosses of Warcraft III heroes [illegible] will no doubt [illegible] what's in store. Honestly, [illegible] Warcraft is already [illegible] game to get several [illegible] $15 per month [illegible] The Burning Crusade is looking ready to [illegible] lid off of the game. [illegible] that Bl[illegible] release it in the projec[illegible] frame – the company [illegible] on content releases isn't ex[illegible] dence-inspiring ■■■



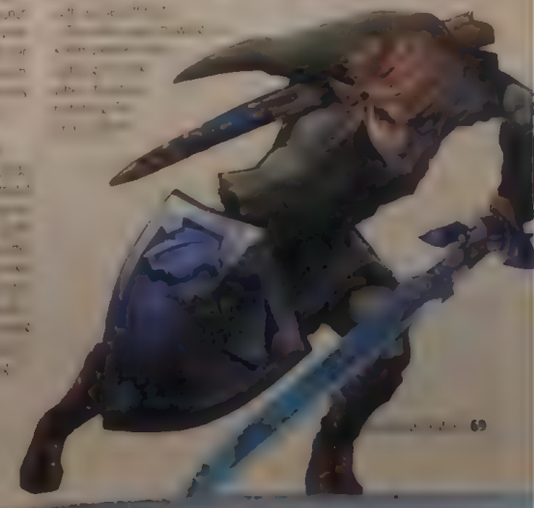
Now it's a [illegible] Frostfire Druids think they can do damage.

12

The Legend of Zelda: [illegible]

A DOUBLE DATE IN HYRULE

A [illegible] ■■■



14

Super Smash Bros. Brawl

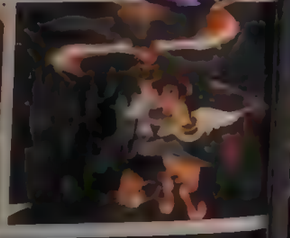
> STYLE: TO 4-PLAYER FIGHTING > PUBLISHER: NINTENDO > DEVELOPER: [illegible] > RELEASE: [illegible]

PINT-SIZED PUGILISTS RETURN

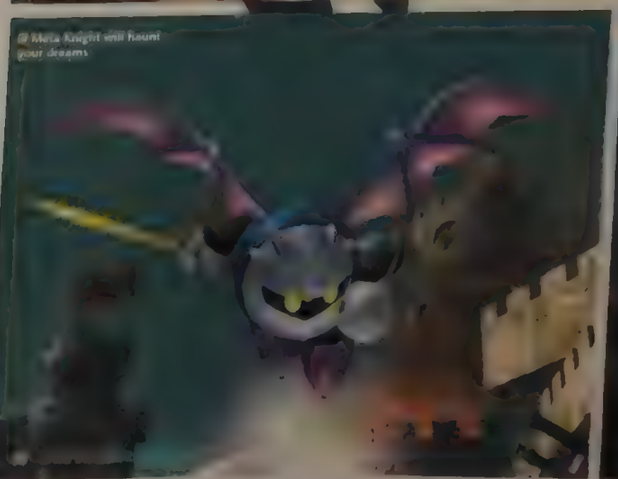
0

[illegible] asked, but few [illegible] online play is uncertain [illegible] perhaps use your GameCube controll[illegible] game had the fans gidd[illegible] Sakurai also addre[illegible] he doesn't want t[illegible] the series, but h[illegible] launchers c[illegible] the game. He [illegible] that Snake's card[illegible] be in the game.

There is still a lot t[illegible] n the coming year [illegible] everywhere c[illegible] better gift for their W[illegible]

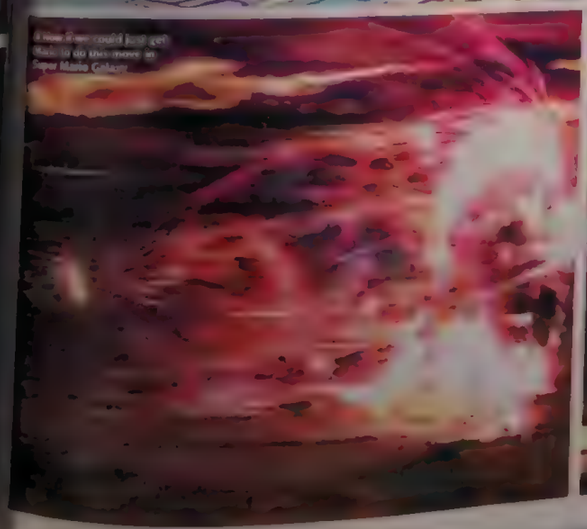


The released videos suggest an appearance by some Nintendogs



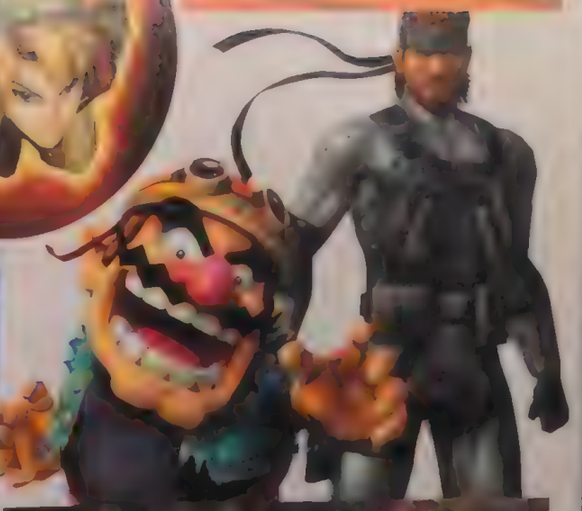
Meta Knight will haunt your dreams

Move over Pink Floyd, the Mario and Zelda laser light show is the new hotness



A new level could just get [illegible] to do this more in Super Mario Galaxy

While the [illegible] [illegible]



Nintendo Metal Gear[illegible] might soon be able to [illegible] your GameCube controller to play them!

PLAYSTATION 3

15 Final Fantasy Versus XIII

> **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/RPG > **PUBLISHER** SQUARE ENIX > **DEVELOPER** SQUARE ENIX > **RELEASE** TBA

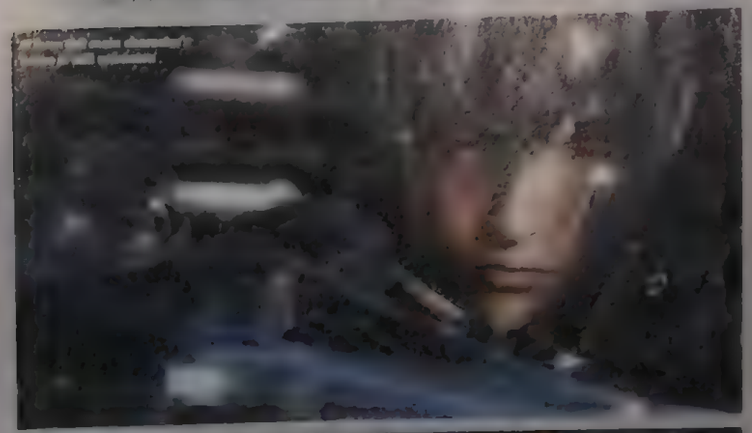
FIGHT!

After its relatively subdued E3 presence over the last few years, the Final Fantasy franchise finally came out of the gate swinging with a whopping 12 titles showcased at this year's show. However, even though one of those games was a playable English build of the much anticipated (and often-delayed) Final Fantasy XII, the title that [illegible] hearts was the [illegible] Nomura's Kingdom Hearts staff. What this means for the future of Kingdom Hearts III is uncertain, but it does suggest that Versus XIII will have a greater focus on action than a traditional Final Fantasy.

Even though gameplay details are scarce, the trailer that Square Enix unveiled at its press conference [illegible] some of the [illegible] haunting [illegible]

[illegible] companions will play a significant role as well. In fact, Nomura announced that bonding will be a reccurring theme in the story. "Bonding is not just about friendship. It's about every kind of relationship we can have with different types of people," he explains. "All of these things will converge to some kind of tragic [illegible] I think tragedy will be a very important element in [illegible] of Final [illegible]

[illegible] tragedy may explain the [illegible] from the [illegible]



If you can summon Omega's guardian swords, you however only become awesome. [illegible]

PLAYSTATION 3

16 Mercenaries 2: World in Flames

> **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION (MULTIPLAYER TBA) > **PUBLISHER** [illegible] > **DEVELOPER** PANDEMIC > **RELEASE** NOVEMBER

FIRE IT UP

You're on an oil rig off the coast of Venezuela, surrounded by unfriendly militia soldiers. Your foes are carrying assault rifles, and you're armed with only a lighter. For most people, this would be the end. In Mercenaries 2, it's just the beginning. You strike up your lighter and toss it towards a stack of [illegible] barrels as you leap off the [illegible] and plummet towards the ocean. In the midst of your fall (and the ensuing explosion) you take out your grappling gun and latch on to your partner's hovering helicopter. As you [illegible] to safety, you know that [illegible] leaving a trail of wreckage behind you. [illegible] job well done – and your [illegible] hefty paycheck.

Pandemic's Mercenaries was packed with indiscriminate destruction that made it a surprise hit last year. Now, its follow-up is expanding on the life of a lonely merc by adding a brand new co-op element. At any point during the game, a second player can join in for split-screen play. The core missions are the same, but a partner in crime will accent the many paths you can take to complete each objective. The player can draw attention to a base from a helicopter, other drives through the jungle in an armored Jeep. Afterwards, both just storm in from different directions, hope that your combined firepower will overwhelm your enemies.

Because so many games [illegible] open world and latch onto it as a selling point, it might be hard to imagine how Mercenaries 2 [illegible] different. Rest assured, it's [illegible] being one of the best-looking [illegible] game's we've seen. World in Flames is well on the way to upping the ante in terms of sheer [illegible] destructibility in a [illegible] This is definitely a case where playing with fire is shaping up to be a very very good thing ■■■

Cue Dukes of Hazzard theme music

17 Enemy Territories: Quake Wars

> **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION (MULTIPLAYER TBD) > **PUBLISHER** ACTIVISION > **DEVELOPER** SPLASH DAMAGE/ID SOFTWARE > **RELEASE** WINTER

FOR THE PLANET

After [illegible] a good amount of time playing Enemy Territories: Quake Wars at E3, it became apparent that the game is going far beyond the Quake license that's attached to the project. While it's cool to be able to relive the [illegible] of Earth that kicks off the Quake [illegible] Wars is definitely its own title. Even though the trumpeted Solo Assignment System – which will give tasks to players and squads based on their composition and experience – wasn't active in [illegible] played, that very early version was [illegible] time.

[illegible] for a game that injects so many new [illegible] into the multiplayer FPS genre, Quake [illegible] learning curve isn't all that steep. Once you [illegible] out how to read the radar, which tells you where all of the current objectives and sighted enemies are, it's a breeze to find the action. For instance, getting the most out of an anti-vehicle [illegible] points you toward enemy [illegible] The open nature of the maps also enables some interesting and effective tactics for smaller squads of players to slip behind enemy lines and wreak some havoc.

The human Global Defense Force feels pretty familiar, with futurized versions of modern military equipment. After all, a [illegible] more exotic. [illegible] same purpose as [illegible] used to the radar. [illegible] little time. The same [illegible] one-man quasi-[illegible] pieces. Once you [illegible] the Strogg [illegible] into full gear and [illegible] flown past.

We had an absolute [illegible] but hopping onto a team [illegible] playing with [illegible] blasted by the [illegible] optimal playing [illegible] to the game [illegible] from deploying [illegible] to exploring [illegible] soldier [illegible] gameplay [illegible] highlights. [illegible] ■■■

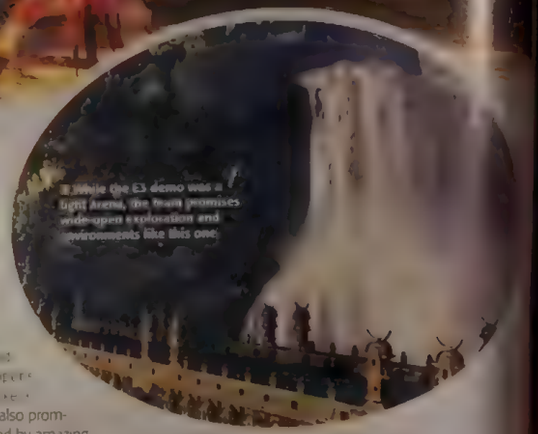
The GDF may not have [illegible] that they do at right

PLAYSTATION 3

Heavenly Sword

> STYLE > PUBLISHER
DEVELOPER NINJA THEORY > RELEASE

SKIP THE EASY JOKE



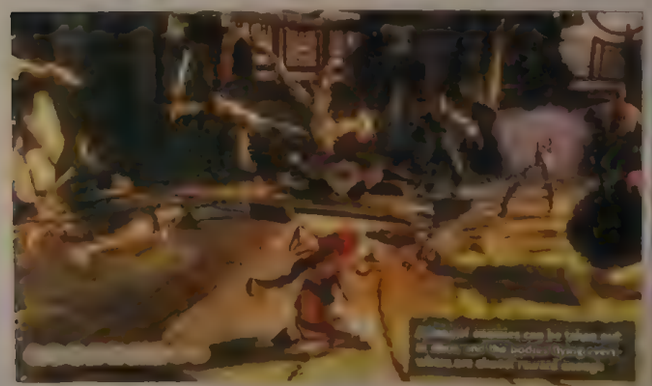
While the E3 demo was a light Arena, the team promises wide-open exploration and environments like this one.

G [illegible] , this early demo also prom- [illegible] mbat highlighted by amazing [illegible] of armed men were slain and we explored [illegible] kill people in Heavenly Sword, the [illegible] red and entered the fray. When the bout between Nanko and this boss character finally got down [illegible] iness, the game switched to a fast button-pressing minigame, and success moved a high-flying fight to its dramatic conclusion. And, yeah, to be honest, it's a lot like God of War's boss battles. Still, if Heavenly Sword is going to ape another game, the developers at least have great taste in what to lift.

And the team at Ninja Theory has clearly been paying attention. While the demo level was a small roofless [illegible] representatives were adamant about one thing – this is n[illegible] arena-only affair. The plan is to have Nanko explo[illegible] puzzles, and kill her way across a variety of open spaces. With the lead character's imminent death, we're even wo[illegible] denng if it's possible that the story will be real-time.

Okay, so maybe "Goddess of War" isn't a total misnome but Heavenly Sword deserves better than being dismissed as a rip-off. High-style combat, a great lead character, and the potential to be as shockingly good as that other brutal action game? Sounds like a good deal to us. ■ ■ ■

kills its bearer within hours. Nanko, knowing [illegible] rages through the countryside to [illegible] what she has lost before she too dies on the blade [illegible] e played was an arena battle with waves of [illegible] men jumping down to the atrium's floor, only to be [illegible]



PLAYSTATION 2

Guitar Hero II

> **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER MUSIC > **PUBLISHER** RED OCTANE > **DEVELOPER** HARMONIX
> **RELEASE** NOVEMBER

ROCKIN' THE SUBURBS

W ...ere is there to say about ...Hero II than we want ...iv more of it as soon as ...sible? At E3, we got to play ...f the new songs making ...stage for this hotly antici- ...d the cooperative duet ...s to totally rock. Re-recorded ...s In My Room Last ...Surfers), "War Pigs" (Black Sabbath), "Psychobilly Freakout" (Reverend Horton Heat), and "Arterial Black" (Dnst) join the songs we announced last month: "Strutter" (KISS), "You Really Got Me" (Van Halen), and "YYZ" (Rush). It may be a while before we get word of any other major included songs. While we love the initial lineup, our hope is that the full song list offers even more genre variety than what we've seen so far. ■■■

20

PC

Hellgate: London

> **STYLE** 1 PLAYER ACTION/RPG > **PUBLISHER** [illegible]
> **DEVELOPER** FLAGSHIP STUDIOS > **RELEASE** TBD

KILL, LOOT, REPEAT

Some games are designed to be intricately balanced, highly competetive events that players can dig deeply into to maximize their efficiency. Not Hellgate: London. This action/RPG is about killing a whole ton of [illegible] getting better equipment, and [illegible] and doing it Diablo-style. The best number-crunching [illegible] that you can use to decode the hidden [illegible] [illegible] is a good time in itself. The best [illegible] that the [illegible] experienced from a first-person perspective [illegible] ■■■

21

John Woo Presents Stranglehold

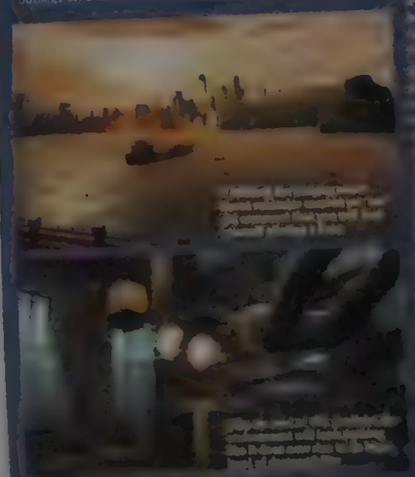
> STYLE [illegible] > PUBLISHER [illegible] > DEVELOPER [illegible]
> RELEASE [illegible]

LET DESTRUCTION REIGN

How many times have you found yourself unloading caps into [illegible] objects in an environment just [illegible] your ammo would some[illegible] [illegible] them? And when [illegible] computer will [illegible] [illegible] with the squeeze of the [illegible], do you shoot every other [illegible] the course of the game? If your answer [illegible] "yes" then brace yourselves for [illegible] Stranglehold.

[illegible] bullets can shatter [illegible] [illegible], make couches cough up [illegible] and stuffing, demolish a [illegible] [illegible] down to its rebar, and blood [illegible] outlines on a tables which either send [illegible] food and plates crashing to the ground. Even the plaster from ceilings can chip off and float to the ground. Everything in the environments can be destroyed. Now picture what a rocket launch [illegible] a cluttered kitchen. Don't worry, [illegible] planning is allowed.

Incredible environmental destruction aside, Midway is also creating a gameplay experience that captures the [illegible] talents of actor Chow Yun-Fat as well as John Woo's insistence that it's not a gunfight unless thousands of bullets are fired and a dove spreads its wings in slow-motion are [illegible] [illegible]. You can run up railings, [illegible] more chandeliers, and dive onto [illegible] [illegible] carts all without breaking the stylish [illegible] of thumping your [illegible] ■■■



The Dark Walkers are a totally original, never-seen-before concept for alien war machines. But they're so awesome, who cares?

While hoverboarding, you'll be able to grapple onto and skitch behind vehicles

22 U[illegible]ment 2007

FOR: PC [illegible]

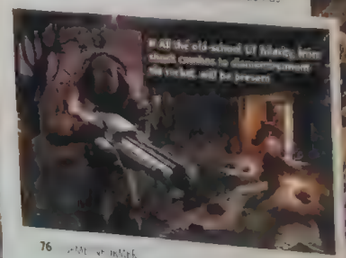
> DEVELOPER [illegible] GAMES > RELEASE WINTER

The [illegible] gamers to [illegible] of the series's shaping [illegible] outstanding [illegible] period, can squeeze [illegible] out of Unreal Engine [illegible] ator Epic Games can, of course, get new models, combat that makes Onslaught look like a bunder-launch in the works. Unreal Tournament 2007 is poised to BIOX up on the [illegible] gamer ever have.

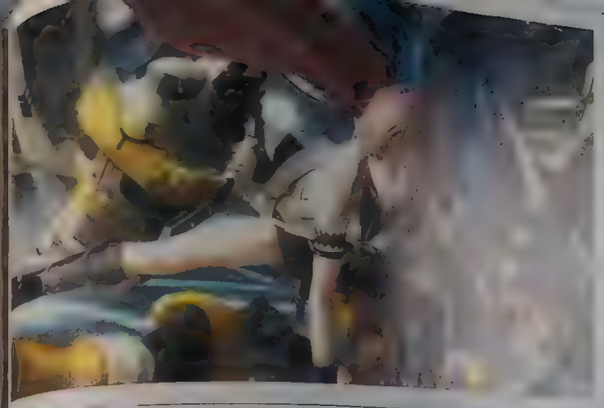
Massive online matches are now the UT franchise's [illegible], and this edition [illegible] up [illegible] Warfare. The new mode combines the popular Onslaught and Assault modes of the series past and drops players into future maps where each team has equivalent but separate objectives. Rather than just fighting over control points, you'll have to carry a power core between various points on the map to take over bases as well as overcome other obstacles to open the way. Unlike some other titles with similar modes, however, both teams will have the ability to go on the offensive rather than ever being stuck on defense for an hour at a time. Epic's decision has [illegible] well so a round of Warfare [illegible] for matches that previous [illegible] given us.

[illegible] may be a large part of UT 2007, but to make the most out of levels that the team has planned fun for everyone, [illegible] method of transportation had to be devised. Epic's present solution is to give every player one-button access to their own personal hoverboard. By whipping it out, you'll [illegible] across the landscape like Michael J. Fox [illegible] Back to the Future sequel – but a single point of damage will [illegible] and you'll have to spend several vulnerable seconds on the ground catching your breath. The whole point is to get players to the conflict zones quickly without requiring the use of a vehicle; we can speak from experience that waiting for a new ride to spawn isn't exactly thrilling gameplay.

The visuals speak for themselves, but we're happy to report that Epic is pushing to evolve the franchise's gameplay as well. No official word has yet been heard about an Xbox 360 release or cross-platform online play, but an announcement along those lines at some point wouldn't surprise us at all. Until then, start saving up those nickels for either a new graphics card or a PlayStation 3, because this is one title that's worth upgrading your electronics collection for. ■■■



All the old-school UT blasts, from stock combos to dismemberment, the rocket, will be present



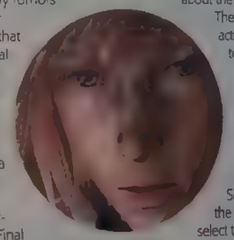
PLAYSTATION 3

23 Final Fantasy XIII

> STYLE 1-PLAYER ROLE-PLAYING > PUBLISHER SQUARE ENIX
> DEVELOPER SQUARE ENIX > RELEASE TBA

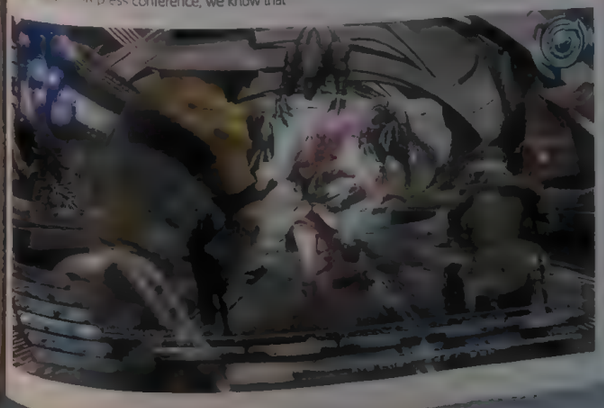
ABSOLUTELY FABULA

[illegible] be said that the announcement [illegible] Fantasy is ever a disappoint- [illegible] any fans of the series were cer- [illegible] to see what was unveiled by [illegible]. After all, many rumors [illegible] pointed in our [illegible] suggest that [illegible] classic Final [illegible] key card - [illegible] 2007 will [illegible] anniversary [illegible] release. [illegible] named of a [illegible] Fabula Nova [illegible] PS3's Final [illegible] cornerstone [illegible] for three dif- [illegible] Final Fantasy XIII, Final [illegible] XIII, and the phone-based [illegible] XIII), Fabula Nova Crystallis [illegible] "the fate of the crystal" in Latin. While [illegible] feature separate stories and charac- [illegible] based on a common mythos, [illegible] XIII will be the first one to intro- [illegible] series to gamers around the world. [illegible] series based in a more traditional [illegible] FF XIII is returning to a futuristic [illegible] sci-fi-technology, as illustrated by [illegible] screens. From the trailer shown at [illegible] press conference, we know that the heroine is acrobatic and highly skilled with weapons, and possesses some kind of psychic powers as well. How these powers are used in combat is still unknown, as are most specifics about the game's battle mechanics.



The fights may look more like an action game than an RPG, but the team at Square Enix is very aware of the line between the two genres, and definitely wants to keep a clear distinction between them. That is why FF XIII will adopt an active time battle system similar to previous games in the series. Powered by what Square Enix calls the White Engine, the ATB allows players to carefully select their actions while eliminating the feeling that you're just waiting for your turn to come up. Could this mean a reincarnation of FF X-2's fast-paced system? If so, let's hope it doesn't have too many dress-up fashion cutscenes.

A new Final Fantasy – in any form – is a huge event in the gaming world. Even though we may have to wait a while to see Cloud and company again (if ever), this mysterious female warrior and her extraordinary abilities leaves us with a good feeling about where the Final Fantasy series is heading. ■■■



XBOX 360 | PC

24 [illegible]

After more than 10 years in development, Prey is finally nearly upon us. The innovative shooter from 2K Games, 3D Realms, and Human Head Studios (and Venom Games, which is handling the 360 version. That's a lot of studios!) was on display at E3 and we got a chance to get our hands on the multiplayer section of the game.

Prey is the story of Tommy, a Cherokee mechanic who has been abducted and brought on board an alien ship. As such, there are many otherworldly aspects to the game, like strange weaponry and even stranger gravity. While each of the weapons works in a fairly standard manner, each has a creepy, biomechanical feel which extends to the environments and enemies. Rendered by the powerfully atmospheric Doom 3 engine, Prey has a look that's as impressive as it is unsettling.

What's even stranger than the weapons and dimensions [illegible] that allow you to walk on walls or even the ceiling. Because of this new twist on gravity, traditional deathmatch stages have a much larger playable area, and you may find yourself having a firefight with someone directly above you. Initially, Prey's twisted world was a little disorienting and confusing, but we quickly picked it up. The ability to walk on the walls and ceiling adds a lot of new strategy to deathmatch, and the ability to move from one area of a map to another via portals only makes Prey's multiplayer feel even more innovative.

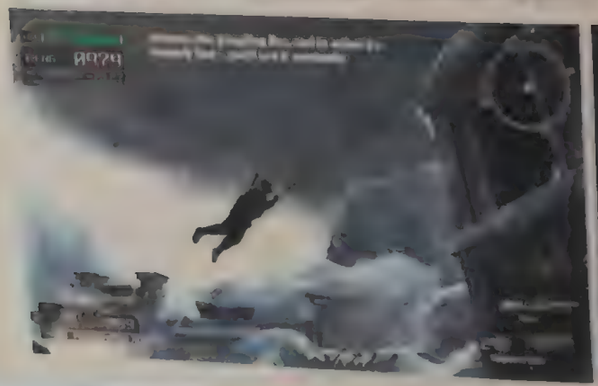
With its new gameplay systems, great visuals, and interesting story, Prey has a lot of potential, and we're definitely interested in checking out the single-player portion of the game. Should everything come together as well as we think it could, Prey's launch during the sparse summer months could help it find the strong fanbase it deserves. ■■■

David Cronenberg

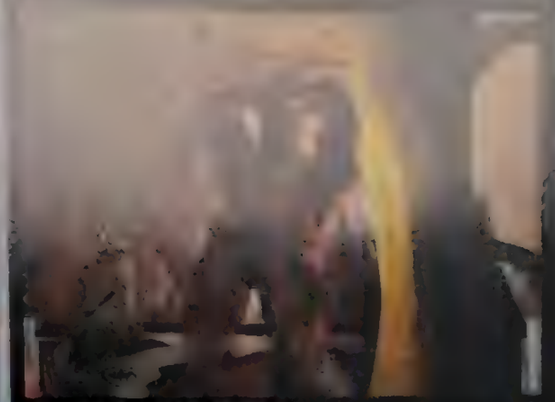
Extreme Condition

> DEVELOPER > RELEASE

A



26 Dark Messiah of Might & Magic



VIOLENCE SAVES THE WORLD

Unreal Engine 3 might be getting a lot of (well-deserved) press, but Valve Software's Source engine is no slouch itself. Dark Messiah of Might & Magic, the second title in Ubisoft's plan to revitalize the Might & Magic franchise, is making excellent use of Source from what we can tell, by integrating physics into gameplay to a much greater extent than just about anything we've seen. Dark Messiah is its very own flavor of first-person adventure.

Two things that we saw at E3 cemented our excitement for this title. The first was a room full of spilled barrels, traps, and various other objects. Interestingly, the player was able to defeat several orcs that charged him with very little actual attacking. By baiting the orcs into their own traps, kicking them into environmental hazards, and generally using the surroundings to great advantage, a nasty combat situation was taken care of with relative ease.

The other event that got our attention was a fight with a cyclops in an underground cave. Far too big and strong to take on directly, the cyclops encounter required a little more thinking. Darting under some fallen rubble seemed to be a good idea until the monster simply picked up the huge slab of stone to get at the hero. Instead, the player ended up running the beast with a log trap to buy time to fire a ballista bolt into its vulnerable eye. Of course, an elaborate death sequence for the enormous cyclops was its own reward.

If this kind of quality keeps up throughout the game, there is no doubt in our minds that Dark Messiah could be the title that Deus Ex fans have been waiting for. And we can't think of much higher praise than to compare a game to that classic. ■■■

Resistance: Fall of Man

> STYLE

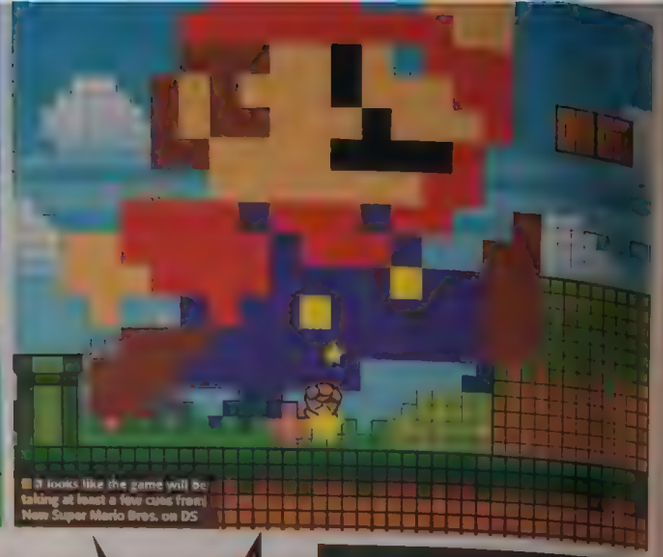
> **PUBLISHER** SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT AMERICA > **DEVELOPER** INSOMNIAC GAMES > **RELEASE** NOVEMBER

A DIFFERENT WORLD WAR

F

was fairly open, full of damaged buildings and troops from both sides running around madly. A second interior level was a bit more linear and featured less peripheral action but still resembled a typical bunker stage in a WWII shooter. However, while Resistance does remind one of other games, it definitely has some unique Insomniac touches [illegible] Ratchet series. Resistance [illegible] alternative weapons based [illegible] Every weapon has a [illegible] which shoots a [illegible] subsequent rounds will [illegible] hitting [illegible] around the environment and detonated remotely. Another weapon is a grenade that sends hundreds of needle-like objects in every direction, affectionately referred to as the Porcupine.

Insomniac is a company known for bringing clever twists to familiar genres, so we couldn't be happier to see them taking on the FPS genre. Merging WWII shooters with sci-fi themes is a concept we can definitely support, and we can't wait to see what other cool weapons and gadgets await us when we get a little further into the game. Plus, with 32-player online support, Resistance looks poised to be one of the most popular multiplayer games of the PS3 launch ■■■



It looks like the game will be taking at least a few cues from New Super Mario Bros. on DS

28

GAMECUBE

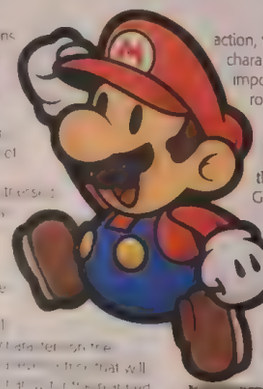
Super Paper Mario

> **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/PLATFORM > **PUBLISHER** NINTENDO > **DEVELOPER** INTELLIGENT SYSTEMS
> **RELEASE** WINTER

STRANGE MIX

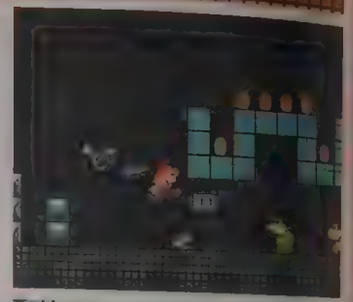
S

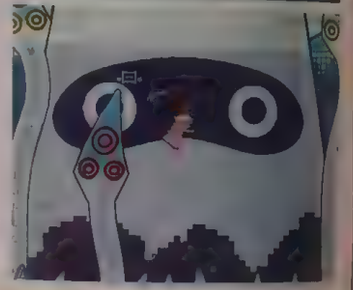
Some of the screens in the game use the Wii's motion-sensor pointer to allow the player to interact with the environment – for example, [illegible] throughout [illegible] wide [illegible] We saw [illegible] battle and [illegible] of [illegible] to [illegible]



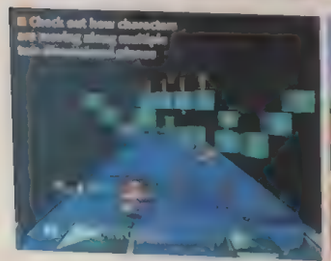
action, the box flits along behind the character, and seems to have an important but as-yet-undefined role in gameplay.

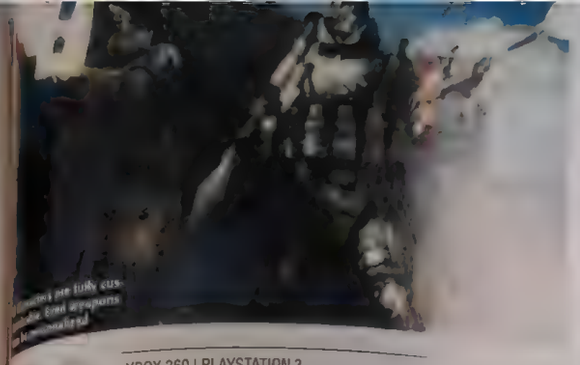
Needless to say, the announcement of such a high profile title for the seemingly forgotten GameCube is something of a shocker. However, backwards compatibility means that both long-time GameCube owners and new Wii adopters will get to try out this latest adventure when it releases late this year ■■■





Check out how characters are moving along multiple [illegible]





Characters are fully customizable. Even weapons can be customized

29

XBOX 360 | PLAYSTATION 3

Army of Two

> **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION (UP TO 2-PLAYER VIA [illegible]
> **PUBLISHER** EA MONTREAL > **DEVELOPER** ELECTRONIC [illegible]

OF WAR AND BLING

The name of the game says it all. Army of Two is designed with the co-op fanatics in mind. This game is all about teamwork. Parachute drops are fun as is, but imagine what it would be in tandem, with one person controlling the chute, and another stationed in front with a sniper rifle. It's up to the gunner to issue commands like "turn right" and "stabilize." Tandem maneuvers include lifting a [illegible] up to a [illegible], but not just to climb [illegible] can also extend an arm over the [illegible] few shots. If you are low [illegible] ammo [illegible] and can toss you a clip, [illegible] ple stories higher. As if [illegible] two-player vehicles are in great abundance, the most [illegible] is a helicopter. The pilot can [illegible] down a rope for his or her co[illegible] in turn can dangle with one arm and fire with the other. Completing missions earns players cash that can be exchanged for new weapons and upgrades. Hit it big and you'll have so much cash that you can outfit your arms with platinum and diamond plating. If you don't plan on playing the game online or via split-screen, you do have the option of playing it single player. EA Montreal has developed intelligent AI that will talk back to you, remember your previous actions, and even flip you the bird if you happen to "accidentally" drop a ceiling onto them. ■■■

XBOX 360 | PLAYSTATION 3 | PC

Frontlines: Fuel of War

> **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION (UP TO 32-PLAYER VIA XBOX LIVE, PS3 ONLINE, OR PC INTERNET OR LAN) > **PUBLISHER** THQ > **DEVELOPER** KAOS STUDIOS > **RELEASE** 2007

NEXT-GEN WARFARE

W

[illegible] out the story on [illegible]lines in our May issue, and [illegible] game looks even better [illegible] Not content with being [illegible] Battlefield clone, Frontlines [illegible] with moving the front lines [illegible] completing objectives in [illegible] setting. Utilizing the role [illegible] allows players to choose a [illegible] and upgrade it as the game [illegible] and intra-team information sharing (target acquisition and the like) will be key to achieving those goals. Overall, developer Kaos Studios is well on its way to making good on its claims of cool destructible levels, intense action, and fun toys and weapons to play with. To cap it all off, Kaos showed us what happens in Frontlines when a superpower gets desperate – it's tough to not get pumped for a game that lets you feel the power of a nuclear explosion firsthand. ■■■

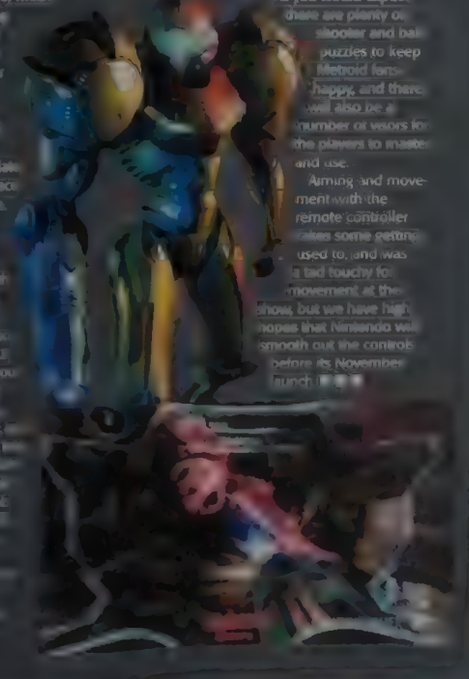
30

Metroid Prime 3: Corruption

THE PRIME NUMBER

The moment Nintendo unveiled the Wii's unique control interface, gamers everywhere knew that Nintendo's wee remote would soon orchestrate the arms of one of gaming's greatest females, Samus Aran. As you would expect, the remote handles your aim, but there are a number of other surprises behind the way this game controls that makes it more than just another first-person shooter.

In the E3 demo, which finds you fighting everything from space pirates to Kalley, a number of unique control features are presented to the player. For one, you are manipulating objects in 3D space using the remote. After activating a control, a cylinder slides out from the wall with a handle. Target it, and then with a press of a button you have it in your [illegible] motion sensor technology in the nunchuck, to use the grappling hook, players must target and then whip this controller at the screen, which sends the energy rope flying across the screen to latch onto its target. A push down on the analog stick sends it flying over your head as you pull the object free. In one level of the demo you even use the nunchuck to rip shields out of the hands of your enemies.



As you would expect, there are plenty of shooter and ball puzzles to keep Metroid fans happy, and there will also be a number of visors for the players to master and use.

Aiming and movement with the remote controller takes some getting used to, and was a bad touchy for movement at the show, but we have high hopes that Nintendo will smooth out the controls before its November launch. ■■■

32

PLAYSTATION 3

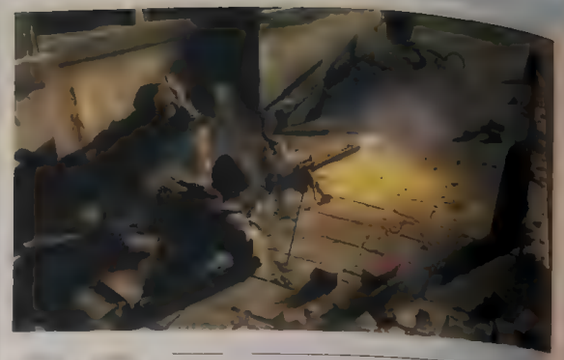
Rainbow Six: Vegas

> STYLE [illegible] > PUBLISHER [illegible] > DEVELOPER [illegible] > RELEASE [illegible]

BRIGHT LIGHTS, BIG DREAMS

[illegible] to blow an access hole in a wall. You can take these ideas, ignore them, or add them to your [illegible]

[illegible] middle of the room, and the [illegible] is on the balcony holding a [illegible] companions to wait [illegible] make cam under- [illegible] the Rainbow operatives. Vegas may be a place for last- [illegible] the team disables their marked targets. Four enemies down and less than 20 seconds for planning, ordering, and executing [illegible] single player tactical options will be included in multiplayer, and a grinning nod was enough [illegible] shower to get our minds racing at this updated vision [illegible] ■■■



33

XBOX 360 | PLAYSTATION 3 | PC

Brothers in Arms: Hell's Highway

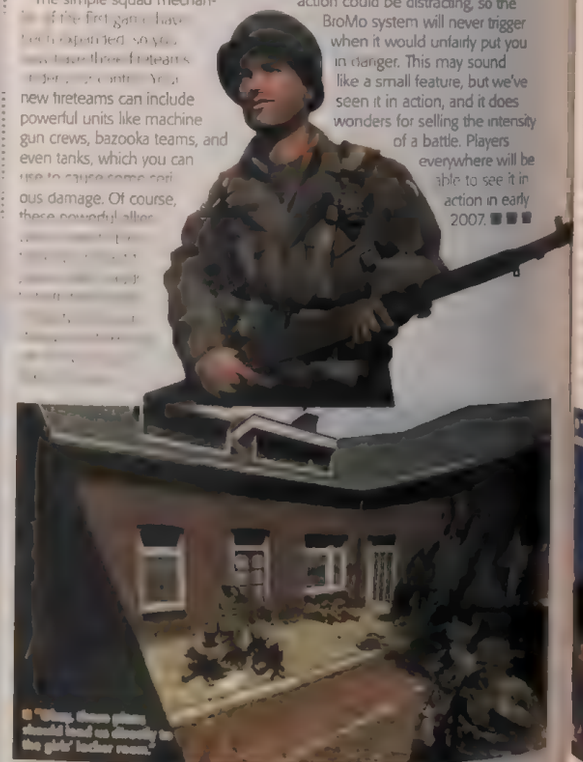
> STYLE 1-PLAYER ACTION (MULTIPLAYER TBA) > PUBLISHER UBISOFT > DEVELOPER [illegible] AKBOX SOFTWARE > RELEASE 2007

HELL AWAITS

World War II games are a staple of the gaming world and more than one WWI shooter is on the way in the next year. However, one stands clearly above the rest of the pack. Brothers in Arms: Hell's Highway, which drops players into the ill-fated Operation Market Garden. While the first two Brothers in Arms games were both well received, Hell's Highway looks set to be the best of the series yet, thanks to its focus on expanding the franchise's key features while increasing the realism and immersion.

The simple squad mechan- [illegible] of the first game have been expanded so you can have three fireteams [illegible] your control. Your new fireteams can include powerful units like machine gun crews, bazooka teams, and even tanks, which you can use to cause some serious damage. Of course, these powerful allies [illegible] they can blow up yours. Many other new features will add to the experience, such as a new feature called 'Brothers Moments' or BroMo.

While the game will have few scripted moments, it will occasionally automatically focus on certain events that highlight the chaos of war. For example, if you are waiting under cover for your squadmates to catch up, the camera may pan to reveal one soldier helping another who has stumbled get to his feet. It may also highlight a bazooka team taking aim at a target, or a spectacular explosion. Of course, being pulled out of the action could be distracting, so the BroMo system will never trigger when it would unfairly put you in danger. This may sound like a small feature, but we've seen it in action, and it does wonders for selling the intensity of a battle. Players everywhere will be able to see it in action in early 2007. ■■■



"Okay, these guys should lead us directly to the girls' locker room."

34

PLAYSTATION 3

Warhawk

> STYLE 1-PLAYER ACTION (UP TO 32-PLAYER [illegible]) > [illegible] > PUBLISHER SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT AMERICA > DEVELOPER INCOGNITO ENTERTAINMENT > [illegible] > RELEASE [illegible] OCTOBER

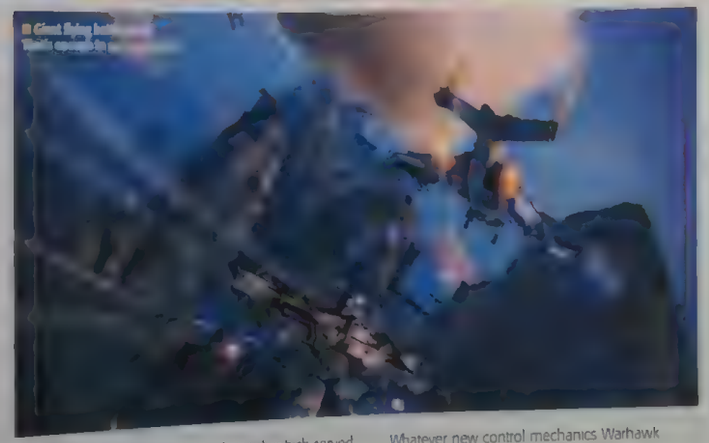
FLIGHT TRAINING

[illegible] arcade-style flight [illegible] were so [illegible] to's remake [illegible] Warhawk in [illegible]. Set in an alternate world [illegible] Chemovan army is invad- [illegible], Warhawk puts the player [illegible] take to the skies and [illegible] that flies.

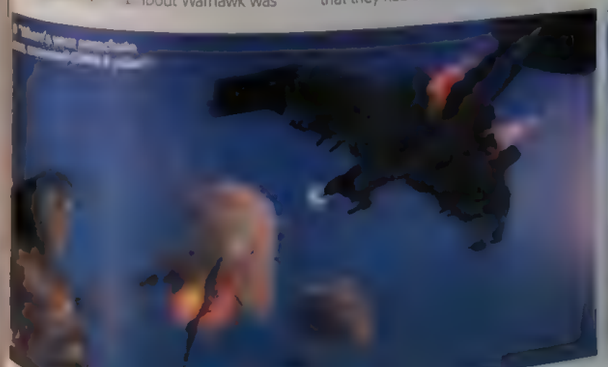
[illegible] Warhawk purportedly also [illegible] actions and ground [illegible] aerial scenario was on [illegible] around an island being [illegible] of enemy pilots and [illegible] carrier-like vehicles, [illegible] with the same arcade [illegible] and it was the only PS3 [illegible] theme that [illegible] Crimson Skies so much [illegible] allows you to [illegible] at multiple targets, [illegible] VTOL-style hover [illegible] guns make short [illegible] crosses your sights. [illegible] pilots adds to the inten- [illegible] bat, and the explosion [illegible] However, perhaps the [illegible] about Warhawk was how it controlled – with the PS3 controller's motion-sensing capabilities.

The motion-sensing ability of the PS3 controller was one of the biggest surprises Sony brought to E3. While the controller's new capabilities overlap with those of the Wii and promise six-axis sensitivity, Warhawk only seemed to recognize three – pitch, roll, and yaw. The game played quite smoothly with the motion-sensing controller, and it was the only PS3 title that took advantage of the feature in any way. By tilting the controller side to side or back and forth, you would move your plane in the game world. However, acceleration and all weapons were handled with normal button inputs. This system was quite easy to pick up, although many players expressed that they had a hard time keeping their thumbs off the analog stick, which served no purpose in the E3 demo of the game. We're curious to see if the motion-sensing controls will also be exclusively used in the unseen ground segments of the game.

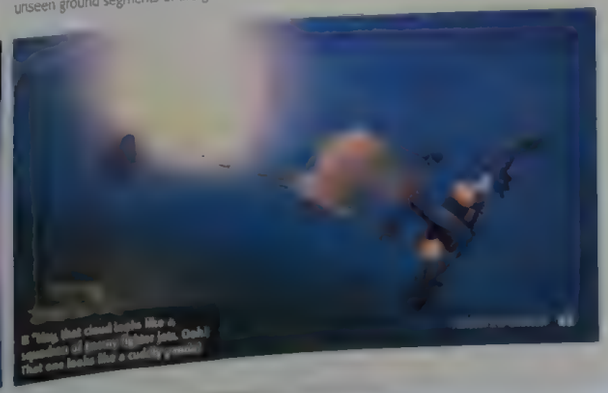
Whatever new control mechanics Warhawk and other PS3 games ultimately utilize, we're sure gamers will quickly adjust to the new features and the gameplay opportunities they present. ■■■



"Okay, that cloud looks like a squadron of enemy fighter jets. Ooh! That one looks like a cuddly grandma."



"Wow, what a view!"



35 Wii Red Steel

> STYLE 1-PLAYER ACTION (MULTIPLAYER TBA) > PUBLISHER UBISOFT
> DEVELOPER UBISOFT PARIS > RELEASE NOVEMBER

CHOOSE YOUR WEAPON

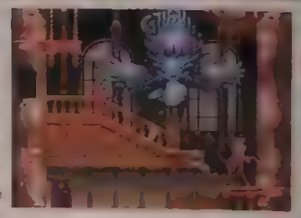
After being unveiled in our [illegible] character at the end of the demo level. [illegible] did [illegible] remote accurately [illegible] our actual sword slashes, but [illegible] unveiled motion sensor [illegible] attachment could [illegible] attacks. Just as the [illegible] promised, timing and [illegible] key to winning the [illegible] and felt just like the mock [illegible] nearly everyone had as [illegible]

36 NINTENDO DS Castlevania: Portrait of Ruin

> STYLE [illegible] PLAYER ACTION (MULTIPLAYER VIA WIRELESS) > PUBLISHER KONAMI
> DEVELOPER KONAMI > RELEASE FALL

MORE HANDHELD GENIUS

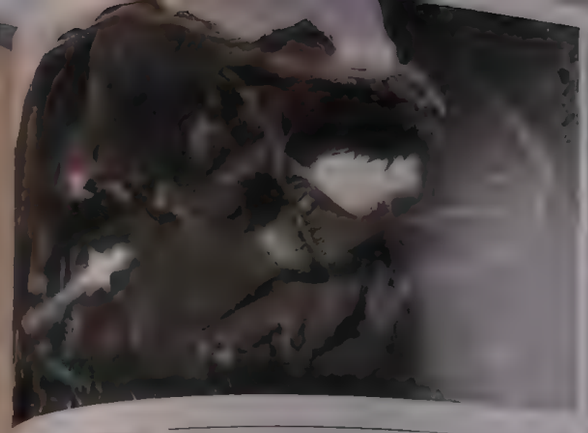
Ko[illegible]



[illegible] one offscreen, and you can even burn [illegible] some magic points to execute sweet tag-team attacks. Both the exploration and RPG facets of the series thankfully appear to be in full effect, so from what we can tell the game should play out more akin to later entries in the Symphony of the Night than the franchise's linear roots. Interestingly, no touch screen functionality was present in the demo that we played – which isn't necessarily a bad thing, considering Dawn of Sorrow's insane Magic Seal system.

The only other thing that we would love to see is wireless two-player co-op – but even though Castlevania mastermind Koji Igarashi was very excited about the possibility when we spoke to him at E3, Konami hasn't confirmed that brilliant feature as of yet. However, some unlockable multiplayer modes that we don't know about yet are definitely in. The DS [illegible], overall, does not keep getting better and better, thanks in no small part to old [illegible] titles like this ■■■

■ The art style and visual quality make this one of the prettiest DS games in the pipeline



37 XBOX 360 | PLAYSTATION 3 Turok

> STYLE 1-PLAYER ACTION (MULTIPLAYER TBA) > PUBLISHER [illegible]
> DEVELOPER [illegible] (PROPAGANDA GAMES) > RELEASE [illegible]

OLD LICENSE, NEW START

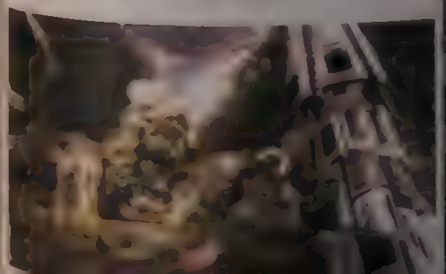
[illegible] that when giant [illegible] massive [illegible] amalgamation [illegible] of awesome [illegible] and rapidly [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] of [illegible] locked [illegible] to prevent such [illegible] Propaganda Games [illegible] safety, and [illegible] doesn't [illegible] start [illegible] those old [illegible] up to the awe [illegible]

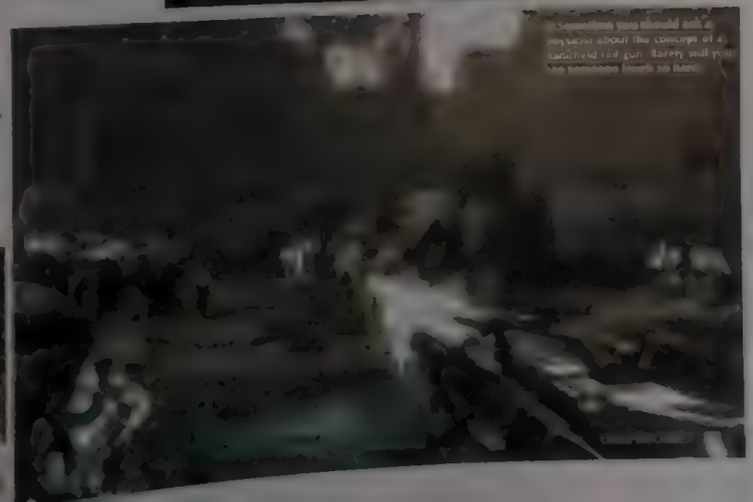
[illegible] sequel in name and [illegible] Propaganda has [illegible] and mythol[illegible] the best ideas [illegible] them in a [illegible] will adopt the [illegible] futuristic farmer [illegible] who's tasked with [illegible] back to [illegible] tered alien planet. [illegible] soon dis[illegible] to a wealth of [illegible] than equal to the [illegible] team.

[illegible] game in action [illegible] and the demo [illegible] the furious intensity [illegible] in enemies [illegible] but it's [illegible] erative AI that [illegible] Of course the highlight reel started as soon as a pack (Gaggle? Flock? Does anyone know?) of raptors descended on the battle, indiscriminately attacking humans on both sides of the conflict. At one point, Turok was tackled by one of the monstrous dinosaurs, and he was forced to desperately stab out with his knife to take down the creature before getting gutted. As if the terrifying speed of the raptors wasn't cool enough, a T-Rex soon joined the party and the real carnage started. One of the coolest aspects of gameplay strategy is the ability to catch the attention of a dinosaur and lead it into an unsuspecting group of enemy soldiers. The soldiers, as it turns out, are not pleased

A unique feature of Turok will be the option it gives you between gun-blazing action and stealth-based sneak attacks, enabled by lightning-fast bow and arrow strikes. We also saw designs for some heavy duty vehicles and all sorts of techie-dream weaponry. Multiplayer has been assured, but Propaganda has remained mum on exactly how it will work. Not a lot of people got a peek at Turok during E3, but it's definitely one of the more exciting new action games to emerge from the craziness of the show floor this year ■■■

■ Stealth [illegible] variety in the combat





■ Something you should ask [illegible] perspective about the concept of a cauliflower rail gun. Rarely will you see [illegible] hands on here.

XBOX 360

38 F.E.A.R.

> **STYLE** [illegible] ACTION (MULTI-PLAYER TBA) > **PUBLISHER** [illegible] > **DEVELOPER** DAY 1 STUDIOS > **RELEASE** FALL

BACK FROM THE DEAD

S[illegible] on the floor at E3. [illegible] smart enemy AI that [illegible] F.E.A.R. so much attention [illegible] to be in full effect in [illegible] observed enemies [illegible] flanking, working [illegible] pursuing the [illegible] the weapons and abilities [illegible] were pressed [illegible] team at Real Time Worlds is

The [illegible] shoot the [illegible] and [illegible]

F.E.A.R.'s enemies are among the smartest AI characters we've encountered to date

XBOX 360

39 Crackdown

> **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION (2-PLAYER VIA XBOX LIVE) > **PUBLISHER** MICROSOFT GAME STUDIOS
> **DEVELOPER** REAL TIME WORLDS > **RELEASE** OCTOBER

GOTTA GET UP TO CRACK DOWN

The rocket launcher is useful for huge explosions and mid-air corpse juggling

Sometimes a uniform [illegible] enough to stop crime. A dozen armed thugs [illegible] exactly going to [illegible] intimidated when [illegible] employment offer pulls into a drug warehouse driving a Crown [illegible]. On the other hand, [illegible] officer instead enters [illegible] driving a car through the [illegible] and smashing the ground [illegible] in part that's a different story, [illegible]

Even [illegible] the game [illegible] team at Real Time Worlds is doing everything it can to give players reason to explore the over-the-top possibilities of the game's sandbox world. One way [illegible] do this is through the use of Xbox Live's Achievements. Where most games simply dole out Gamer Points when you reach a certain point in the story, Crackdown will be a little more inventive in the behavior it rewards.

Let's say you fire a rocket at a passing [illegible] and he goes flying into the air. Thanks to the [illegible] your [illegible] doesn't need to be the end. Before the body even hits the pavement, you can [illegible] another shot and send him even further in the air. Still have ammo? Fire away! [illegible] how long you can keep the [illegible] you might get an Achievement...providing you don't lose sight of the body in the stratosphere.

If you prefer acrobatics to weapons, you can decide to scale Agency headquarters, the tallest building in the city. While this is no small task, the greatest challenge comes when you reach the top – there's no easy way down. By jumping off, the only way to save yourself is to land in the safety of a pond, which could also land you a new Achievement to brag about. In many open world games, buildings are used to limit the player's access, but in Crackdown they are merely another way to do something totally awesome. Sadly, you'll just have to keep planning your stunts instead of playing them as you wait for the game's fail release ■■■

Off-duty hands are a clear, [illegible] sign [illegible]

XBOX 360 | PLAYSTATION 2 | XBOX | GAMECUBE | PC

Splinter Cell Double Agent

> **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION (UP TO 6-PLAYER VIA XBOX LIVE, PS2 ONLINE, OR PC INTERNET OR LAN) > **PUBLISHER** UBISOFT
> **DEVELOPER** UBISOFT SHANGHAI (XBOX 360) UBISOFT MONTREAL (PS2, XBOX, GC, PC) > **RELEASE** [illegible]

YOU'RE PLAYING BOTH SIDES

D[illegible] nearly upon us and [illegible] so many unan[illegible]ons. We don't envy [illegible] having to show their game at E3 – the Splinter Cell titles should [illegible] whole, and not as [illegible] levels that the event [illegible] seeing someone Cloud [illegible] the whole of the Star [illegible] awesome? Well that [illegible] pretty rad, but without seeing the rest...its genius might be missed.

[illegible] perilous level select screen [illegible] the newest Splinter Cell. It should suffice to say that we're all okay everything's okay here and Sam's latest mission promises the most nefarious variety of any entry before it. We watched as an innocent citizen was executed. Instead of saving him we opted to be a chump and preserve our own cover. In hindsight, that was cruel, but it's what the game is going to ask of players over and over through this double-crossing, back stabbing infiltration saga.

While hopping between distant spots on the globe, we weren't privy to how exactly these choices play out, but we did get to see some of Sam's new tricks. A favorite was on, or more aptly, under, a field of ice floes. We dead-dropped in from an airplane, retrieved our gear and then went underneath the ice. As a guard paced above, we found thin patches in the ice by checking for bright spots on the dagger floor. Swimming up to listen for footsteps and tracking him like a polar bear would mercilessly hunt, we finally lined up underneath him. The attack came swiftly. Sam punched the ice, pulled the man through the crack, and dispatched him with stunning efficiency.

One big part of the game experience that we sadly didn't get any hands-on time with was multiplayer. It's looking like we'll have to wait for release to see if the team's ambitious changes will make the experience more accommodating, while still keeping [illegible] that hardcore fans have grown [illegible]

[illegible] killers on [illegible] sides [illegible] that we expected Sam to get all soft on us, but Double Agent is infused with the [illegible] conflict of a man asking how far he's willing [illegible] Double Agent [illegible] he's a badass either way ■■■

Developing Splinter Cell, with its [illegible] on [illegible] in the same [illegible]

One [illegible] of Sam's gear is the sheer variety of the tools

41

PLAYSTATION 2

Naughty Dog Project [working title]

> STYLE > PLAYER ACTION > PUBLISHER SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT AMERICA > DEVELOPER NAUGHTY DOG > RELEASE TBA

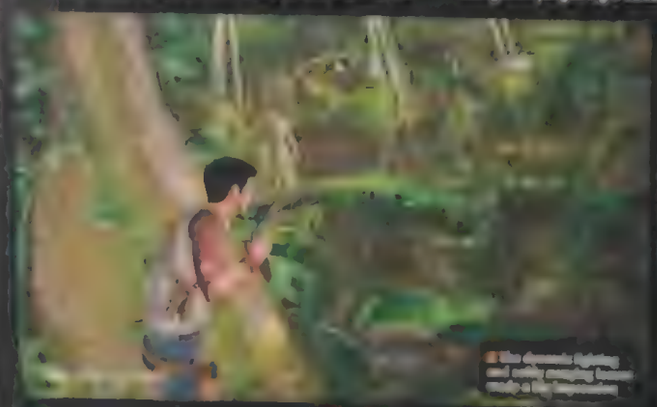
PITFALL?

Looking at the games scheduled for the next year, one could easily assume that jungles are the new lava world. It seems that next-gen hardware is letting developers get down with their inner equatorial fanboys, and as good as these venues look, we're more than willing to go along for the ride.

At Sony's press conference, which was long on time and short on surprises, one standout was this as-yet-untitled adventure from Naughty Dog. Best known for the Jak and Crash Bandicoot series, the company displayed footage with truly impressive realism. On the surface, this sounds like a risky gamble. Switching the company's standard art direction from over-the-top cartoon visuals to this video, which showed an amazingly realistic animation system and very dynamic action, seems like a bold move. Instead, remember that the Jak series in particular consistently pushed the PS2 to its graphical limits. It's a different style, but the team has certainly shown the skill required to get this new franchise just right.

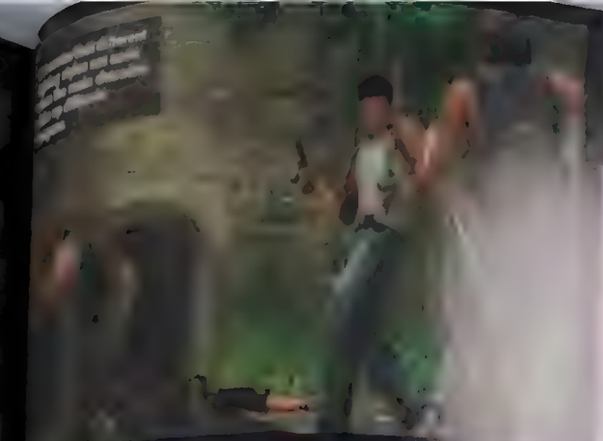
The trailer showed a variety of indoor and outdoor locations that the hero moved through by leaping across gaps, swinging on vines, ducking from cover to cover, and kicking down doors. Vehicles were also shown and everything shattered, splintered, and chipped away with full physics. The overriding vision after it was all done, though, was of the lush and overgrown jungle. Light streaming through the canopy highlighted ancient ruins and armed enemies.

Firefights seemed to be the bulk of the action and the main character is strapped with a few pistols, although some close combat shots suggested that he can strip enemies of their weapons. Could this mixture of Prince of Persia exploration, Metal Gear close combat, and Pitfall locations be the big ticket for PS2? The manufacturer is clearly putting a lot of stock into one of their biggest developers, and the company's track record makes us believe that this is a promising first look at a game that merges the best of some of our favorite mechanics. ■■■



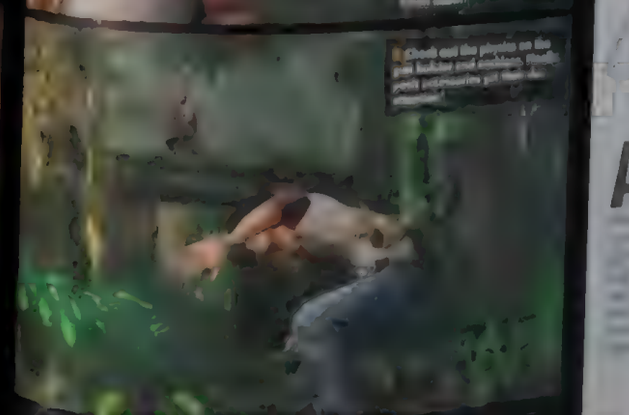
The dynamic lighting and richly emerging bases make a big impression.

Up close and personal, realistic close-ups show off cloth textures and highly detailed characters.



Is it just us, or does the lead character look alarmingly like an Naughty Dogger (and Cosmo Scharf, of the month) Kieran Baikie?

Check out the physics on the gas bottles and anchors, that's pretty impressive for real-time cinematics.



43

Metal Gear Solid: Portable Ops

> PUBLISHER
> DEVELOPER > RELEASE
> PLAYER AGE TBA

A

44

Tony Hawk Project 8

PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

A

Create-a-park is gone, but players will be able to set up various props around the environment.

Like the previous game, Project 8 is still all about big combos. It can have a ball of a lot more.

The use of lighting and shape of field pots at the lower on the collections, which deliver to other smooth style

Smooth motion capture and collision detection, the combos flow like water.

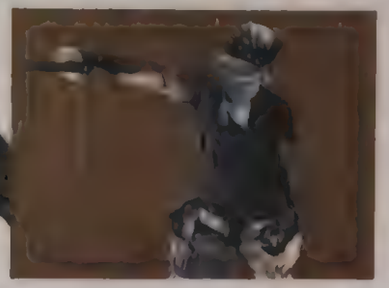
45

XBOX 360 | PLAYSTATION 3

The Club

> STYLE [illegible] > PUBLISHER [illegible]
> DEVELOPER [illegible] > RELEASE [illegible]

THE RUNNING MAN



46

PC

Company of Heroes

> STYLE 1 PLAYER STRATEGY (UP TO 8 PLAYER VIA INTERNET OR LAN)
> PUBLISHER THQ > DEVELOPER RELIC ENTERTAINMENT > RELEASE FALL

WORLD WAR AWESOME

Developer Relic has a pretty impressive track record, most recently including Warhammer: Dawn of War and the Homeworld series. That doesn't look to be changing any time soon. Company of Heroes was even more impressive this year at E3 than it was when first we saw it a year ago, and that's saying something. Of course, the basic RTS action is more than satisfying, but the outstanding environmental destruction and interaction lend some credence to Relic's claim of having true "living battlefields." Improved unit AI and a Dawn of War-esque resource model (where holding control points on the map is central to your economy) also help make Company of Heroes one of the more exciting PC titles for this holiday season. ■■■

48

XBOX 360 | PLAYSTATION 2 | XBOX | PC

Just Cause

> STYLE [illegible] > PUBLISHER [illegible]
> DEVELOPER AVALANCHE STUDIOS > RELEASE [illegible]

THIRD WORLD WARRIOR

G[illegible] all the point that's been [illegible]d on Xbox 360 open-[illegible] titles like Crackdown and [illegible] we're surprised [illegible] promising Just [illegible] subject of more [illegible]st year as a rough [illegible] demo in an Eidos [illegible] year the game [illegible] for Xbox 360 – really [illegible] in the shoes of [illegible] whose mission [illegible] corrupt govern[illegible] country called [illegible] this mission [illegible] the possibility [illegible] really since U.S [illegible] the dictator of San [illegible] is stockpiling weapons of mass [illegible] (and we're rarely wrong [illegible] intriguing premise is a [illegible] world that [illegible]kes GTA-style sandbox [illegible] to the ne[illegible]vel. The island itself [illegible] 2[illegible]00 acres in size, and [illegible]layer with no loading whatsoev[illegible] graphic technique[illegible] ated an extremely [illegible] packed with everyt[illegible] cities and over [illegible] work with rebels [illegible] you'll see new a[illegible] under your contro[illegible] gic element to th[illegible]

Despite the grit, [illegible] the gameplay act[illegible] a famous superag[illegible] addition to a host of [illegible] ventional weapon[illegible] most-used gadget is [illegible] You can pull your [illegible] allowing you to basic[illegible] to vehicle with your [illegible] one point in the demo, we even saw a[illegible] instance where the player grapple[illegible] to a helicopter from the top of a [illegible] sine, shooting at enemies all the way u[illegible] If the finished product has even clos[illegible] to this level of dynamic and c[illegible] gameplay, Just Cause could well be on[illegible] of the breakout hits of 2006. ■■■

47

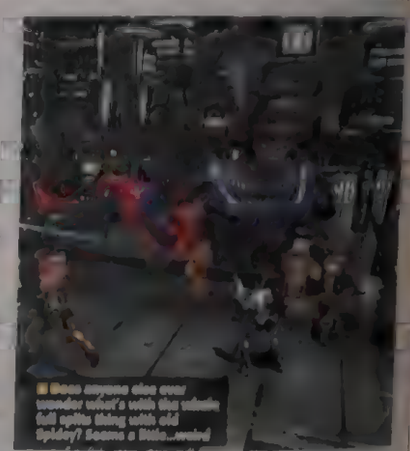
XBOX 360 | PLAYSTATION 3 | Wii | PLAYSTATION 2 | XBOX | PSP | PC

Marvel: Ultimate Alliance

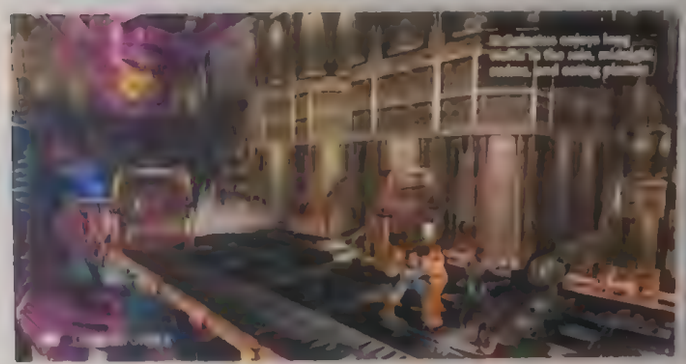
> STYLE [illegible] > PUBLISHER [illegible]
> DEVELOPER [illegible] > RELEASE [illegible]

ANY WAY YOU WANT TO PLAY

A[illegible] ■■■



Does anyone else ever wonder what's with the whole full spitting thing with old Spidey? Seems a little...weird



"Isn't it great that we're all in high-quality, successful movies? Oh, sorry Thing, Blade, and Ghost Rider."

50

Alone in the Dark

> STYLE [illegible] > PUBLISHER [illegible] > DEVELOPER [illegible]
> RELEASE [illegible]

W[illegible] [illegible] sequences. Even your [illegible] character [illegible] ■■■

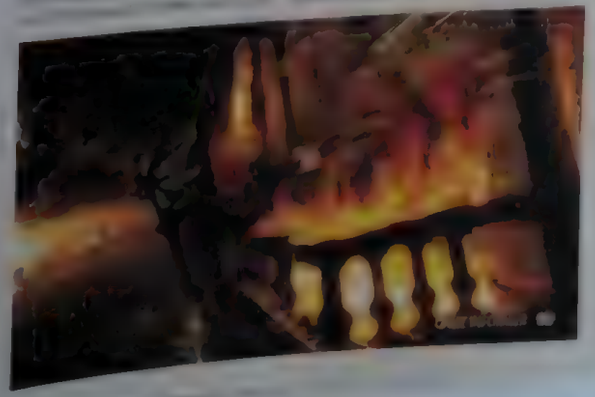
PLAYSTATION 3 | XBOX 360

Indiana Jones

> STYLE 1 PLAYER ACTION > PUBLISHER LUCASARTS > DEVELOPER [illegible]
> RELEASE [illegible]

CRACK THAT WHIP

W[illegible] Arts' next-gen [illegible]ture last [illegible] but that doe[illegible]n't mean [illegible]ut of surprises. [illegible]ction again at the [illegible]nted that the [illegible] only innovative [illegible]me will also [illegible] that keeps track of [illegible]ects in the environment will crack, [illegible] depending on their den[illegible] under repeated [illegible] will deform as they are [illegible] This technology will ap[illegible] you can expect to [illegible] titles as the company [illegible] its next-gen strategy. ■■■



PHOTOPHILE

Mini Previews With Big Pictures

PC

F.E.A.R.: Extraction Point

Thankfully, Vivendi Games isn't letting the [illegible] of F.E.A.R. [illegible] the release of an expansion pack. Extraction Point continues the creepy tale of Alma, the sort-of undead little girl with a prodigy [illegible] people who breathe, [illegible] of the intense action too fall in love with a year ago [illegible] this new chapter is an absolute joy to see. Short of a complete [illegible] the Chronicles embodies the most fury we've ever seen in a sequel [illegible] good looking. No doubt it'll come in handy against [illegible] shadowy beasts that love nothing better than [illegible] heroes to bits. Hopefully, F.E.A.R. will get the retail respect it [illegible] this fall when Extraction Point releases.

PLAYSTATION 3

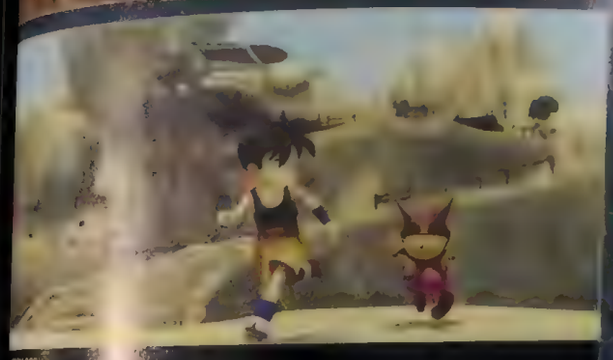
Heavy Rain

To Indigo Prophecy fans: Get this game on your radar right now. A slightly-[illegible] video was shown in the PlayStation 3 booth for [illegible] called Heavy Rain, a new game from Quantic Dream and publisher [illegible] Both parties are being tight-lipped about release date, other platforms, and even if this is related to Indigo Prophecy or is a whole new tale. What we do know is that the video is an intense monologue, culminating with a crying [illegible] problem her gun to the viewer's forehead. While the presentation [illegible] the biggest [illegible] made by the [illegible] and [illegible] which the trailer promises [illegible] and [illegible].

XBOX 360

Dead or Alive Xtreme 2

It may not be Ninja Gaiden 2, but at least the Xbox 360 is getting more love from [illegible] and Team Ninja. The gaming world's most infamous volleyball game is returning this year with Dead or Alive Xtreme 2, only for 360. While the first game placed graphics firmly [illegible] gameplay, Itagaki and his crew are promising more to do in the second game, including jet skis, waterslides, and many more activities that nubile young ladies partake in while frolicking on a tropical island. Of course, players who prefer the DOA games as eye candy won't be disappointed either, as a new photo mode can be triggered at any point. And [illegible] we'd be remiss in our duty if we didn't mention the "third-generation physics" applied to the game's bounciest parts, which allows breasts to jiggle independently. Class [illegible]



Blue Dragon

[illegible] this color-saturated RPG got so overshadowed at Microsoft's [illegible] sessions at the show highlighted Blue Dragon's charming [illegible] The RPG from Hironobu Sakaguchi's Mistwalker [illegible] U.S. release date, but will be a Japanese-friendly 360 [illegible] with the idea of light versus dark (the heroes' shadows [illegible] and mirror their owners' personalities, but are only [illegible] source around) and a look that merges Akira Toriyama's [illegible] with more realistic backgrounds.

PC

Dead Head Fred

Film noir detective stories and zombie flicks are two genres of [illegible] that have been separate for far too long. Thankfully, early next year developer Vicious Cycle and publisher DJ will fix this oversight with the tongue-in-cheek action title Dead Head Fred. Players find themselves in control of the headless reanimated corpse of private detective Fred Neuman as he shambles through the city of Hope Falls. The town's inhabitants have been irradiated and transformed, and the only way you can fight them off is by using a variety of different heads that grant you special abilities, like [illegible] fire and spewing poisonous gas. Dead Head Fred's mixture of humor and [illegible] position as the one handheld zombie detective game to watch [illegible]

NINTENDO DS

Lunar Knights

Hideo Kojima Productions may be most famous for its games involving Solid Snake, but the upcoming Lunar Knights is an entry in the studio's handheld Boktai series. This holiday season you'll take up the roles of two main characters you switch on the fly. Light and dark continue to play a large role in your vampire hunters' power, but the day and night cycle now happens automatically within the game – though players will still be able to use the daylight sensor in the previous games' GBA cartridges if they are looking for an excuse to go outside.

PLAYSTATION 3

Full Auto 2: Battlelines

The first Full Auto game had a lot of potential, but didn't quite live up to it. We've been rooting for a sequel, and Sega has promised another vehicular combat outing this time coming to PS3 (although we'd be surprised if it didn't also come up on [illegible]). Full Auto 2: Battlelines is taking the destructibility of the original even further, allowing you to hide behind new routes and use the rubble as a weapon. A [illegible] mode has been added as well, giving [illegible] the single player game. Multiplayer will also see some upgrades, like a Twisted Metal-style [illegible] to the vehicle physics, plus base assaults. With these additions and improvements to the vehicle physics, Full Auto 2 could be the fun, frantic game we were hoping the first would be [illegible] around PS3 launch.

PC

Command & Conquer 3: Tiberium Wars

Who isn't pumped for the next evolution of the beloved C&C franchise? People who don't know awesome when it crushes their base under an unstoppable wave of Mammoth tanks, that's who. C&C 3 is definitely en route to being nearly everything a fan could want out of this long-awaited sequel. A detailed and intricate backstory involving the fictional mineral Tiberium and its impact on global politics sets the stage for EA's promise to tell a gripping narrative through three single-player campaigns – presumably one each for the Global Defense Initiative, Brotherhood of NOD, and the hinted-at third faction of some kind of aliens. A game type with a Rise of Nations-like strategic metagame will be available as well, for those who enjoy more of a freeform experience. When we hear more about a release date or concrete gameplay details, you'll be the first to know.

NINTENDO DS

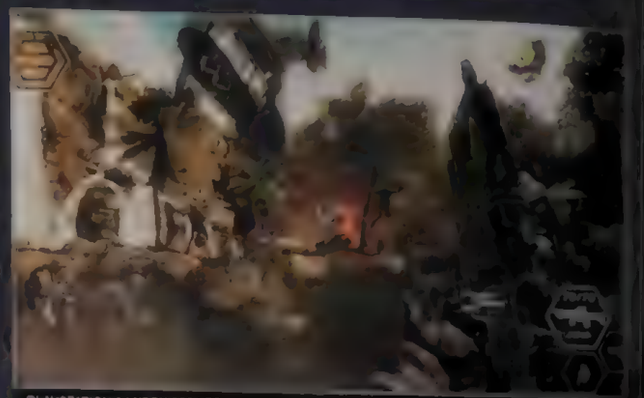
Cooking Mama

Sleeper hit of the show? The crown might be up for discussion, but it certainly wouldn't be the biggest overstatement when Cooking Mama comes up. This Majesco title is due stateside by the end of the year and has gamers prepping, cooking, and presenting over 75 dishes with the option of whipping up their own specialties. Finally, we can find out if two good things always do taste good together. The game's medal-awarding judgement system might not be as keen on the Gummi Crunch as we are, but computers can't feel, so they'll never really get the dish's subtle allure.

PLAYSTATION 2

Lemmings

As if making lemmings explode on command and letting them fall to their [illegible] wasn't fun enough, Team 17 has a great idea in store for the new PS2 entry in the series. Utilizing the EyeToy, the console version will let players use their bodies to guide the green-haired morons through treacherous terrain; you can use your [illegible] to bridge gaps, or put up your hands to stop the lemmings' march. The game will even allow gamers to import their created levels from the PSP version. Unfortunately, this title is currently only slated for a European release, but since it looks like the most inventive use of the EyeToy in a while, don't be surprised if you eventually see it on our shores.



PLAYSTATION 3 | XBOX 360 | PC

Haze

While there were many new franchises mixed in with returning series at this year's E3, one stood out as a bit more mysterious than the rest: Haze, the new FPS by Free Radical and published by Ubisoft. Based on what we saw, Haze appears to be a fast-standard first-person shooter, but the strange ending to our live demo hinted at some big twist that awaits players, though no one was talking. Free Radical showed off the lush South American jungle setting and squad-based first-person action, and the company's pedigree with the TimeSplitters games assures us that it will be a fun time. But we're curious to hear more about what other surprises could be lurking in the [illegible] and its near-future private military force theme. We, like you, will have to wait until 2007 to find out.

PSP

Brooktown High: Senior Year

Were you a loser in high school? Of course you were. Now, thanks to Backbone Konami, you'll be able to relive your glory days with Brooktown High: Senior Year. Scheduled to hit shelves in spring next year, this dating simulation will allow you to create a male or female avatar and roam the halls of a school populated exclusively with attractive (and bouncy!) potential mates. Of course, it's not all about making out under the bleachers – there's the ever-present social structure to contend with, complete with nerds, preppies, and jocks. Wow... just add a scene involving a lonely bathroom stall and this game sounds like a direct port of our real-life high school experience.

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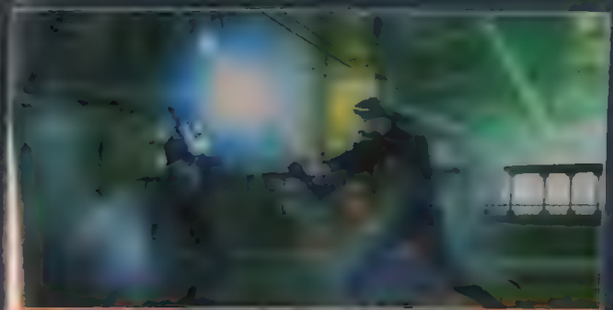
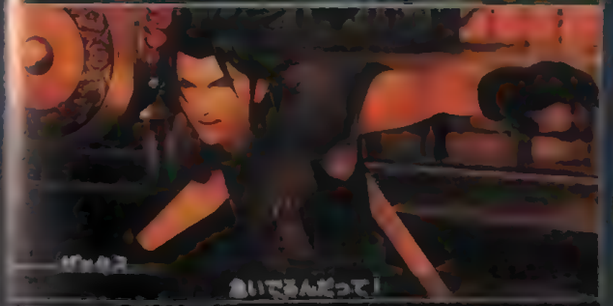
XBOX 360 | PLAYSTATION 2

The Sopranos

While *Deadwood* would probably be our first choice, HBO's first foray into adapting its critically-acclaimed programming into games is its most recognizable show, *The Sopranos*. Coming late this year, The Sopranos puts you in the shoes of whacked mobster Sal Bompensiero's son, as he attempts to get in good with Tony Soprano. You'll take on tasks like collections, intimidations, and probably dirtier work in order to join Tony's gang and climb the ranks, you know, like in The Godfather game. While you don't play as Tony, James Gandolfini will reprise the role for the game, as will other key cast members. Developed by 7 Studios (who spearheaded the Fantastic Four game), only time will tell if the Sopranos game licenses can't change with the times.





PSP

Crisis Core: Final Fantasy VII

What was Sephiroth up to before he was burning villages and impaling loved ones with a seven-foot sword? Our sources tell us that he spent most of his nights mutilating his sister's Barbie dolls and stabbing pictures in his high school yearbook. Now we'll find out what really went on in that head of his in Crisis Core, a prequel to Final Fantasy VII. Mr. One Winged Angel will certainly be a prominent player in this chapter in the series, but the game actually follows Zack, a charismatic recruit in Shinra Corporation's SOLDIER division. As we all know, Zack sowed as the core of Cloud's fractured identity. Although little is known concerning gameplay, Square has stated that this game will be an action/RPG, and the teaser trailer that was shown at the company's pre-E3 press event did showcase acrobatic swordplay and highly cinematic story sequences. While we'd love for [illegible] game immediately, Square has yet to set a release date.

PC

Neverwinter Nights 2

[illegible] 2, among many others), is closing in on releasing its latest product. Neverwinter Nights 2 is due to be on shelves in September, and will come packed with all of the tools that Obsidian is using internally to develop the game. So, in addition to the huge amount of full-on Dungeons & Dragons goodness that comes in the box, the mod community that latched on to the first game should be able to kick into high gear right away with NWN 2. A new party system for the single-player game (which functions much like the one in KOTOR), vastly friendlier interface, and completely reworked graphics engine should make this one of the better PC titles of this year.

PLAYSTATION 3 | XBOX 360 | PLAYSTATION 2 | XBOX | GAMECUBE

Madden NFL 07

Take a seat, Randy Moss. Go hit the showers Shaun Alexander. They may be the marquee matchmakers of the NFL, but [illegible] to Daylight, players will get the chance to control the tackle, center, guard, tailback, or wide receiver that suits up the age. The running back will follow through the hole that you create. Sticking with the theme of enhancing the running game, EA has also upgraded the zone-blocking with new schemes such as the Outside Zone, which in the current-gen versions is a new scheme exclusive to Madden. The [illegible] just run his routes and make the catches. This also means that you'll be on the [illegible] when your team is on defense. Madden will make its debut next month for the [illegible] 360, PS3, and Xbox, and [illegible] Playstation 2.

Wii

WarioWare: Smooth Moves

The Wii isn't a console for the extremely self-conscious, and no title illustrates this fact better than Nintendo's own WarioWare: Smooth Moves. The game asks players to assume a variety of bizarre and humiliating positions as they use the remote to navigate through 200 bite-sized challenges. Will you have to swivel your hips as you hula, or do squats as you hold the remote on top of your head? Other less embarrassing activities include balancing an upright broom, tracing an onscreen outline, and chopping stuff in half. No release date for this crazy minigame medley has been announced, but it was in good shape on the E3 show floor, so we could see it in the launch line-up come November.

NINTENDO DS

Elite Beat Agents

Import DS players have been boasting for some time now about the wacky fun of this strange little rhythm game, and it finally looks as if the wider American audience will get to make up their own mind. The elite beat agents are a peculiar group, [illegible] than the Pet and the Oil, and their [illegible] appears to be to dance. And with such heroic energy that they help someone solve their problems by inspiring them to [illegible] dance. Did we mention this game is [illegible]? Each stage is a self-contained song with one of these [illegible], based on the quality of your dancing, [illegible] as you tap and hold prompts to the music. Doesn't the elite beat agents by asking those who are [illegible] to dance by the end of the year.

PLAYSTATION 2 | XBOX | PSP

Thrillville

With Thrillville, LucasArts and studio Frontier Development are approaching the theme park genre with the thought of it being a highly interactive and personal experience. Micro-management, building rides, and designing the park are part of the picture, and are as deep as you will find in similar PC titles, but this game also allows you to create your own character, get to know your guests, and interact with everything in the park. Medley games like bumper cars, mini-golf, and Saucer soccer, are all playable components – some even feature multiplayer and customization. As you explore the park, you'll also run into characters that have missions for you to complete. Thrillville is set to shake up theme park simulations this fall.

PSP

LocoRoco

The PSP may be many things, but home to quirky innovation hasn't historically been one of them. A brief change looks to be in the air this September when Sony delivers LocoRoco from the company's Japanese studio. Players tilt the world around six different types of LocoRoco who squish, slide, and swing their way through the 40 stages. If the art style doesn't charm you, the music very well should, as the score and sound effects are a wacky match to the game's pop-art color scheme. Minigames and "wireless features" are also promised, but few specifics on either have been announced yet.

NINTENDO DS

Final Fantasy III

As an evil supervillain probably once said: "At last, my collection is complete! Muwa ha ha!" The last chapter in the Final Fantasy series is the only one that never made it to the U.S., but that will change this September when Square Enix brings us this visually overhauled remake. In addition to graphics that recall the days of Final Fantasy IX, the game features changes that flesh out the story and enhance the main characters, plus a touch-screen interface which can be used to handle everything from navigation to target selection in battle. And just in case you were wondering, no, plugging this DS cartridge to your copy of Final Fantasy X will not magically create Final Fantasy XI. You'll just have to wait like the rest of us.

WINTENDO DS

Star Fox DS

Would you rather sell your soul to the devil, or play another Star Fox game with Fox McCloud running around on foot? The fact that some of you are even debating which scenario would be worse clearly illuminates where this troubled franchise needs to go next. Although displaying many unflattering FX Chip qualities in the visuals, we are more than pleased with the gameplay direction that developer Q-Games is taking. This is classic Star Fox gameplay, but instead of leading the player along on rails, the level offers complete freedom of movement. The DS touch-screen is also used in interesting ways, such as being able to draw the routes that your wingmen take through a level. Additionally, dogfighting is planned in the forms of eight-player local wireless and four-player Wi-Fi. Best of all however, Star Fox will release sooner than you think on August 28.

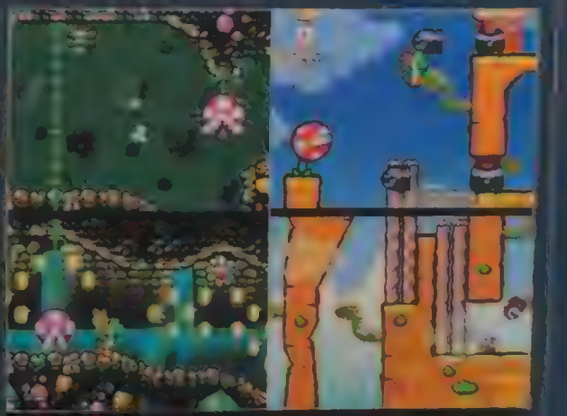
PLAYSTATION 3 | XBOX 360

Golden Axe

Sega has been looking to its past to chart out its future, reviving old franchises for the next generation. One of the first to see such a revival is Golden Axe, which is being developed by San Francisco-based Secret Level for the Xbox 360 and PlayStation 3. The game isn't scheduled to release until 2007, so information is scarce. We're hoping that the new title allows you kick gnomes, our favorite part of the original. Using beasts and using magic has been [illegible] gameplay is a natural fit. We're big fans of hack 'n slash action, so we can't wait to see how this old favorite is reinvented.

Sid Meier's Railroads!

[illegible]



NINTENDO DS

Yoshi's Island 2 (working title)

It would be easy to fault Nintendo for its reliance on those core platforming heroes introduced decades ago, but when the results are as promising as Yoshi's Island 2, we'd say that those accusations are dead wrong. Instead of a half-baked re-release, the adventure due out by the end of this year ponies up baby versions of Mario, Donkey Kong, and Peach to make Yoshi's platforming skills more varied. The team is going to need as many super skills as they can get, because used from Nintendo is that every one of the game's levels will span the DS's pair of screens.


X-Men: The Official Game

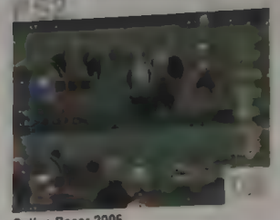
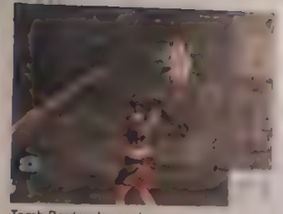

Gallop Racer 2006


Table Tennis

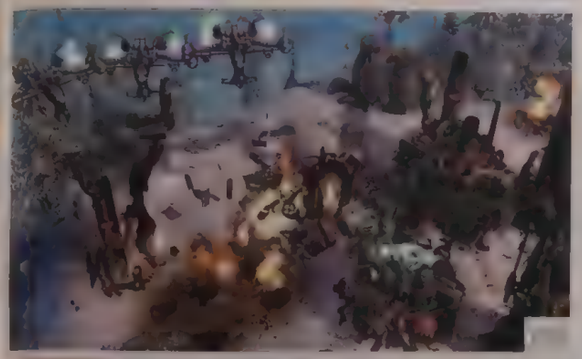

SiN Episodes: Emergence


New Super Mario Bros.


Tomb Raider: Legend

New Super Mario Bros.

Has it really been this long since we've had a brand new side-scrolling Super Mario Bros. title? After all the deluxe reissues and repackagings, Nintendo is finally giving fans what we've wanted for years, and the iconic old-school plumber has never looked better. New Super Mario Bros. is that rare title that manages to capture the great things of the past, while providing enough new twists and turns to keep things interesting. If you came up in the NES era, this game will provide you with a bracing reminder of why you fell in love with games in the first place. For younger DS fans, it's an education in the timeless and still-viable art of the 2D game.



Rise of Nations: Rise of Legends

Rise of Nations was a kick in the collective pants of the RTS genre back in 2002, injecting more traditional strategy game concepts into a fast-paced, real-time framework. As with all the best sophomore efforts, Big Huge Games blows the doors off of its own previous success with this sequel. An outstanding level of polish, amazing diversity in all aspects of the game, and kick-ass online support make this the next RTS you need to play.

REVIEWS INDEX

Our crack (or crackhead, we can never decide which) review team rates games in a number of categories to help you sort out the great from the stuff you'll hate. Most games are reviewed by two staff members, and you will find both their opinions on each review. To make things a little easier we have put together some definitions of what the numbers mean, what we look for in a game, and also a cheat sheet so the newbies can understand our advanced video game jargon. It is important to note that the Game of the Month is determined only by the main review score, not an average of the two opinions.

THE SCORING SYSTEM

10	Outstanding. A truly elite title that is nearly perfect in every way. This score is given out rarely and [illegible]
9	Superb. Just shy of gaming nirvana, this score is a high recommendation because [illegible]
8	Very good, innovative, but perhaps not the right choice for everyone. This score [illegible] many good things to be had, but arguably so
7	[illegible] are nothing that even casual players [illegible] recent game from beginning to end
6	[illegible] may be fans of games receiving this score, many will [illegible] more revolutionary game experience
5	Passable. It may be obvious that the game has lots of potential, but its most engaging features could be undeniably flawed or not [illegible]
4	[illegible] some things may work as planned [illegible]
3	Painful. If there is anything that [illegible] play and uneven execution in its features or theme
2	[illegible]
1	[illegible] bad that we had to create a super-advanced hybrid word to [illegible]

> **Concept:** What new ideas the game brings to the table and how well old ideas are presented.

> **Graphics:** How good a game looks, taking into account any flaws such as bad collision or pop-up.

> **Sound:** Does the game's music and sound effects get you involved or do they make you resolve to always play with the volume down?

> **Playability:** Basically, the controller to human interface. The less you think about the hunk of plastic in your hands, the better the [illegible]

> **Entertainment:** [illegible] just how fun the game is to play. The most important factor in rating a game.

> **Replay Value**

High	[illegible]
Moderately High	[illegible] long while, but the [illegible]
Moderate	[illegible] a few time [illegible]
Moderately Low	After finishing it there [illegible] it a second go
Low	[illegible]

theedge

When All Games Aren't Created Equal

[illegible]

C	[illegible]
E	[illegible]
E	[illegible]
T	[illegible]
M	[illegible]
A	[illegible]
RP	[illegible]

For our newer readers, here is a glossary of terms and acronyms that commonly appear in the magazine. Video game veterans should move along (these aren't the droids you are looking for).

1080i A resolution specification used for HDTV. 1080i stands for resolution of 1920x1080 pixels. [illegible]

480p [illegible] progressive), creates a picture signal with double the scan lines of a conventional interlaced picture. 480i (i = interlaced) to create a noticeably sharper image. The 480p image offers higher picture resolution and eliminates virtually all motion artifacts in a 640x480 pixel resolution setting.

720p – A resolution specification used for HDTV. 720p stands for resolution of 1280x720 pixels. The "p" means that the video is in progressive [illegible]

action – A term we use for games like Devil May Cry and Resident Evil.

ad hoc – A type of wireless connection that connects you with other players in your [illegible]

adventure [illegible]

AI [illegible]

bloom glow of bright light reflecting off of surfaces

board A term we use for games like Monopoly [illegible]

bullet time [illegible]

CG [illegible]

cheats [illegible]

D3 – Electronic Entertainment Expo. The world's largest convention for video games.

fighting A term we use for games like Mortal Kombat and Dead or Alive.

first-party A game made by a console manufacturer's internal development teams exclusively for its own system.

FMV Full Motion Video. Usually refers to an animated or cutscene [illegible]

FPS [illegible] frames happen in one second. Also used to denote First Person Shooters like Halo, Doom, and Call of Duty.

frameworks – The frames of animation used to [illegible]

framerate [illegible]

GBA [illegible]

GC [illegible]

HDTV [illegible]

infrastructure [illegible] players over long distances.

LAN – Local Area Network, connecting computers or consoles together within a virtual space to allow communication between them. Provides fast, simultaneous gameplay.

MMO – Massively Multiplayer Online. Usually applied to role-playing titles, we use the term for games with persistent, multi-user online worlds like EverQuest and World of Warcraft.

motion blur [illegible] to give the impression of visible speed.

normal mapping A graphical technique in which a three-dimensional 3D representation created by high-detailing of the surface is wrapped around a low-res model.

NPC [illegible]

parallax effects [illegible]

platform A term we use for games like Super [illegible]

pop-up [illegible]

PS3 – Sony PlayStation 3.

puzzle A term we use for games like Tetris and Puzzle Fighter.

racing A term we use for games like Crash Tyrano and Mario Kart.

Revolution The correct way to pronounce "Wii".

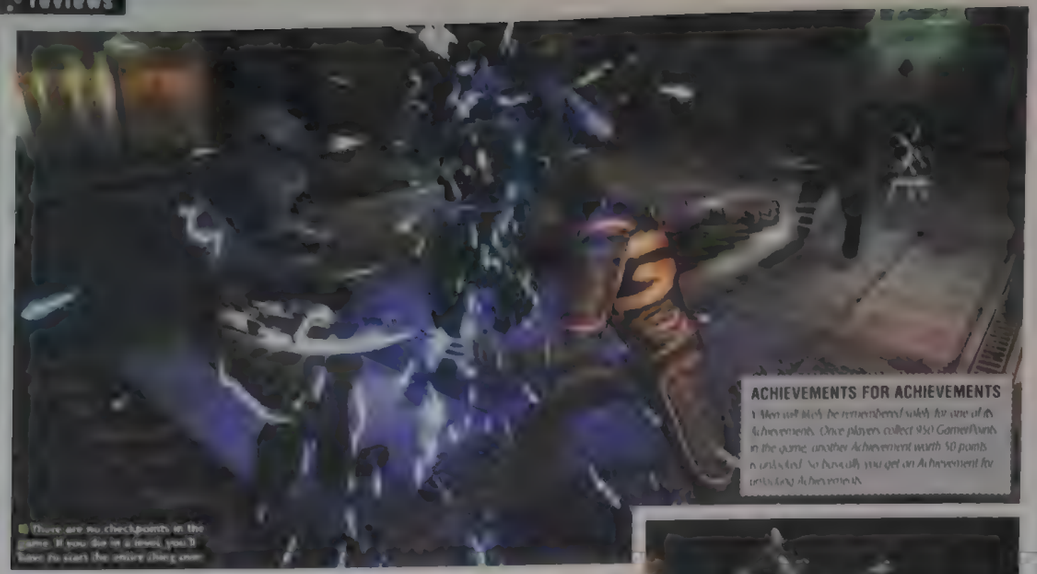
RPG Role-Playing Game. A genre that involves character improvement through collecting and spending points. A term we use for games like Final Fantasy and Ratchet.

Shooter [illegible] and Doom.

sports A term we use for games like Madden NFL.

strategy A term we use for games like Le [illegible] and Warcraft.

third party [illegible]



There are no checkpoints in the game. If you die in a level, you'll have to start the entire thing over.

ACHIEVEMENTS FOR ACHIEVEMENTS

X-Men will likely be remembered solely for one of its Achievements. Once players collect 950 GamerPoints in the game, another Achievement worth 50 points is unlocked. So basically, you get an Achievement for unlocking Achievements.

Nightcrawler is the only character that is handled properly.

XBOX 360 PLAYSTATION 2 XBOX GAMECUBE

X-Men: The Official Game

> STYLE > PUBLISHER > DEVELOPER > RELEASE > ESRB

MUTANT GENOCIDE

W [illegible] another [illegible] to tell [illegible] reaction [illegible] blood, this [illegible] flat-out stupid. Sending Nightcrawler to Hell is even [illegible]

[illegible] the quality of the cinematic sequences is even worse [illegible]. Rather than telling the story through animated clips, the game makes use of still frame sequences that feature voiceovers from many of [illegible] like a high-quality comic production. Have you ever watched a person get crushed by a [illegible]ck without animation? I can now say that I have.

The Hindenburg-like development philosophy [illegible] flat-out stupid. Sending Nightcrawler to Hell is even [illegible]

[illegible] the quality of the cinematic sequences is even worse [illegible]. Rather than telling the story through animated clips, the game makes use of still frame sequences that feature voiceovers from many of [illegible] like a high-quality comic production. Have you ever watched a person get crushed by a [illegible]ck without animation? I can now say that I have.

The Hindenburg-like development philosophy [illegible] enemy types rarely don't change from level to [illegible] room to room.

[illegible] note the mechanics that bring Nightcrawler's teleportation to life are easy to use [illegible] the character is fun to quickly [illegible] the office to a ledge behind your adversary. Z-Axis has definitely captured the spirit of this character better than any game, but the challenges that await this blue devil are just as lifeless and repetitive as Wolverine's.

And let's not forget about the exploits of Iceman who should be rewarded with the honorary rank of fireman given the number of blazes he has to put out in this game. Soaring on the ice stream is definitely cool, but the objectives that you are forced to complete are just [illegible]. The big battle against a [illegible] boils down to the player [illegible] blasts of [illegible] ice from robotic [illegible] the same gameplay mechanic from Ultimate Strike, Back on Attack 2600.

[illegible] this game was digital mousetrap [illegible] what happens, but you [illegible] will [illegible] getting snapped unless [illegible] the X-Men [illegible] simply want [illegible] that [illegible] your friends [illegible] game like you [illegible] of food. —**REINER**

BOTTOM LINE 4

> **Concept:** A lost chapter in the X-Men movie mythos that should have remained lost

> **Graphics:** Stellar character detailing that is framed in [illegible] barren and shoddily designed environments

> **Sound:** Hugh Jackman, Patrick Stewart, Alan Cumming, and Shawn Ashmore reprise their roles, but their performances almost seem comedic due to the low quality of the cutscenes

> **Playability:** Each of the three playable characters feature different gameplay scenarios. Unfortunately, all three are tarnished with serious design problems

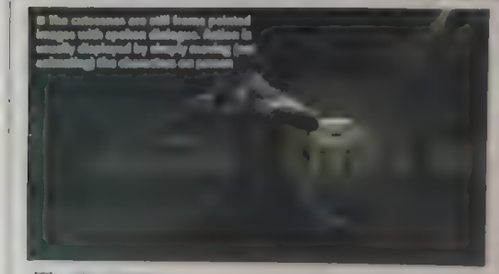
> **Entertainment:** Easily one of the most disastrous of the X-Men releases yet

> **Replay Value:** Moderately Low

Second Opinion 3

Talk about [illegible] are you only [illegible] this game [illegible] the reason why [illegible] the idea of [illegible] two and three [illegible] one [illegible] little silly [illegible] help that the storyboard-style cinematics [illegible] of the title heroes deep and unfinished. I'd like the [illegible] variety offered between three playable characters a lot better. Only [illegible] worked pretty darn well. [illegible] guessed, they don't every [illegible] trick in the book is played to make the game seem longer than [illegible] citizens of nearly identical enemy waves to frustrating level restarts after a cheap death. The whole [illegible] feels [illegible] attempt at [illegible] to the player [illegible] blasts of [illegible] robotic [illegible] the same gameplay mechanic from Ultimate Strike, Back on Attack 2600.

[illegible] this game was digital mousetrap [illegible] what happens, but you [illegible] will [illegible] getting snapped unless [illegible] the X-Men [illegible] simply want [illegible] that [illegible] your friends [illegible] game like you [illegible] food. —**MILLER**



The cutscenes are still frame painted images with spoken dialogue. Action is usually displayed by slowly moving (not animating) the characters on screen.

ICEMAN STAMINA

01:00 HOURS

Putting out fires at a factory

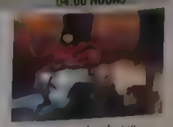
02:00 HOURS

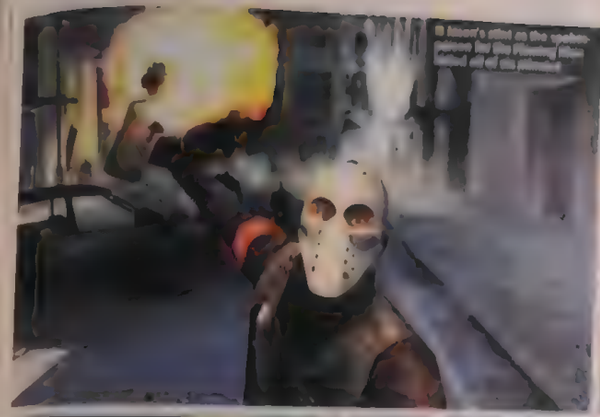
Shooting at fire-birds in a nuclear power plant

03:00 HOURS

Battling a fire dragon

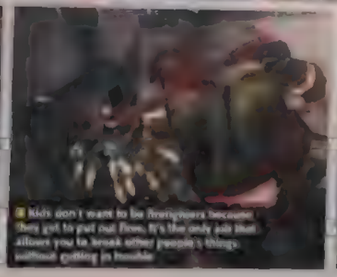
04:00 HOURS





Jason's gear on the spawn screen for the Phantom Man level of the Assault.

This adversary also received a rocket launcher blast.



Kids don't want to be foreigners because they get to get out free. It's the only job that allows you to break other people's things without getting in trouble.

OVERALL 7.75

> Concept

> Graphics

> Sound

> Playability

> Entertainment

> Replay Value

PLAYSTATION 2 | XBOX

Urban Chaos: Riot Response

> STYLE [illegible] > PUBLISHER [illegible] > DEVELOPER ROCKSTEADY STUDIOS > RELEASE JUNE 13 > ESRB M

ANOTHER ENJOYABLE SLEEPER

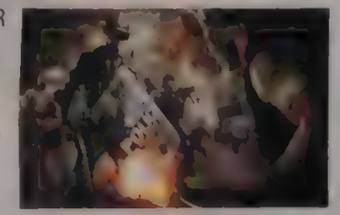
Urban Chaos answers a question that's been swimming around in my head ever since I was a pimple-faced teenager. What would happen if you [illegible] cloning machine and decided to unleash hell upon a major metropolitan area? The answer, as you would expect, is quite pleasing.

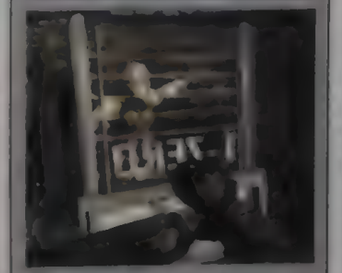
[illegible] have firefighter desperately tries to devise a [illegible] cloning machine and decided to unleash hell upon a major metropolitan area? The answer, as you would expect, is quite pleasing.

[illegible] have firefighter desperately tries to devise a [illegible] citizen. His progress comes to a screeching halt when a goon wearing a hockey mask decides to [illegible] meat cleaver into his back. The startling (yet highly awesome) sequence is what Urban [illegible] all about. Brave men and women are trying to save the city, but you have to watch their backs and work together to provide the support that the crippled community desperately needs.

[illegible] cheesy premise, Urban Chaos is a unique [illegible] that proves to be engaging thanks to a solid gameplay package. Where the game shines is in its usage of a riot shield; not only is it extremely handy for blocking incoming fire, it provides the most satisfying skull crack since the rocket launcher in Halo 2. Let me tell you, a hockey mask won't protect anyone from the force that is put behind these shield thrusts. With Havok 3 fueling the physics, watching bodies soar and die in painful ways is quite amusing. The game even slows down and zooms in to show you the more hilarious deaths. Speaking of which, some of the lights that you get in are staged [illegible] right down to how adversaries will [illegible] reason to go back and perform better in each level, thus giving the game a bit of longevity. Online is also present, but its sub-par quality means that this is by no means a destination where you want to spend more than 20 minutes of your life.

Like Cold Winter and Project Snowblind before it, Urban Chaos is a nice distraction from the FPS giants. It's by no means a blockbuster that can suck away years of your life, but it offers up memorable thrills that you won't find anywhere else. It's well worth a look. —**REINER**





Second Opinion 2.5

[illegible]

The Da Vinci Code

> STYLE 1-PLAYER ADVENTURE > PUBLISHER [illegible] > DEVELOPER THE COLLECTIVE > RELEASE MAY 19 > ESRB T

Environments look really great and give a sense of scale

SACRE BLEU

BOTTOM LINE 6

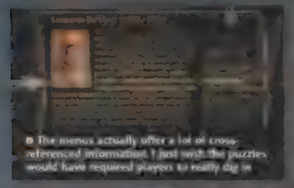
> Concept: Translate the [illegible] itself a translation of a book, into a video game that captures little of what made the novel a fun read

At its core, The Da Vinci Code (no matter which medium you're experiencing it in) is about an ancient mystery unraveled by two intellectuals. At what point, then, would one expect or demand that they get into frequent fistfights with the authorities? This is but one of many questions that the development team at The Collective had to answer when designing this adventure title and, while I don't envy their position at all, I have to say that many of the core ideas don't work very well.

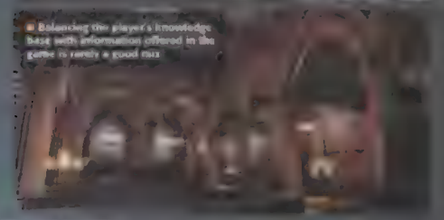
The book does not contain, for example, a series of hand-to-hand brawls where the main characters are delivering themselves while spouting off cheesy one-liners. The game, on the other hand, does. And often. It's almost as if the video game version feels guilty when the subject matter gets too "high-brow," and it's a shame because when they do let players just sink into the mythology, it's actually pretty fun.

Extensive menu systems let you access the character's knowledge base on art history, cryptography, and symbolism. If the controls were tighter, this would be a joy for puzzle dorks like myself. Instead, I was cursing the random flipping between menus and inconsistent selection methods within puzzles. And, while I appreciate puzzles that I wouldn't know the answers to from reading the book, most of these added sequences feel half-baked at best.

If the whole shindig had been tightened up and the game had faith in players (i.e. believe that we would find being a dorky scholar rewarding), the whole experience could have been much more pleasurable. Instead, the game muddies up what's [illegible]



The menus actually offer a lot of cross-referenced information. I just wish the puzzles would have required players to really dig in



Balancing the player's knowledge base with information offered in the game is rarely a good idea

Second Opinion 6

[illegible]

MATT

PLAYSTATION 2 QUICKIES

PLAYSTATION 2

Gallop Racer 2006

BOTTOM LINE 6.75

> STYLE 1 TO 4-PLAYER SIMULATION > PUBLISHER TECMO > DEVELOPER TECMO
> RELEASE MAY 2 > ESRB E

When it comes right down to it, reviews aren't much more than a well thought-out opinion. Now, I'm well aware that there are some folks out there who adore the menu-driven management and breeding strategies inherent to the Gallop Racer series. I respect that viewpoint. It's just that I don't share it. For me, the dated graphics, elevator-style music, and endless scrolling through lines of text and numbers just doesn't get me excited. The new Theme Park mode aims to supply what's fun about horse racing, but fails to offer even the most basic understanding of how to get started and succeed. As for the races, there are few games that have made me feel less like I was a part of the interactive experience than this. If you already like the series, not enough has changed to stop you from enjoying it. And that's exactly the reason why new players may as well just stay away.—**MILLER**

PLAYSTATION 2

Street Fighter Alpha Anthology

BOTTOM LINE 7.5

> STYLE 1 OR 2-PLAYER FIGHTING > PUBLISHER CAPCOM > DEVELOPER CAPCOM
> RELEASE AUGUST > ESRB T

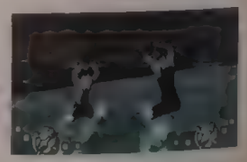
On paper, Street Fighter Alpha Anthology sounds likes a dream. It includes all three Alpha titles, as well as Alpha 2 Gold and Super Gem Fighter Mini Mix, a simplified cute fighter with characters from franchises like Darkstalkers. But although each Alpha game adds new fighters and more elaborate super moves, they're really not all that different, so this compilation doesn't feel as jam-packed as other collections. But how do these games hold up today? Well, to use a tired and true game reviewer cliché, fans of the series will love these straight-from-the-arcade ports, while players weaned on 3D fighters will continue to wonder why the Street Fighter series was ever considered a big deal.—**JEREMY**

PLAYSTATION 2

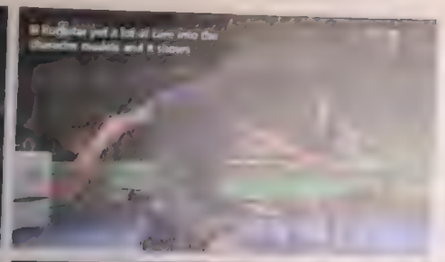
Naruto: Ultimate Ninja

BOTTOM LINE 6.5

> STYLE 1 OR 2-PLAYER FIGHTING > PUBLISHER NAMCO BANDAI > DEVELOPER CYBERCONNECT 2
> RELEASE [illegible] > ESRB T



It has always bothered me that most versed fighters are primarily concerned with fulfilling a fanservice quota rather than delivering a solid game. While Ultimate Ninja still provides a ridiculous amount of fodder for Narutophiles, I was surprised to find that it actually does some creative and fun things with the combat. The battles are more akin to Smash Brothers than Street Fighter, with a simplistic control scheme and plenty of pick-ups in the environment that result in some crazy bouts. The overall zaniness of Naruto shines through in big super-moves that play out in interactive (though overly long) cinematics, and fans will love the pile of varied unlockables. Even so, for gamers who don't know jutsu from chakra, don't expect the game to give you any real incentive to play independent of its source material.—**JOE**



Rockstar put a lot of care into the character models and it shows

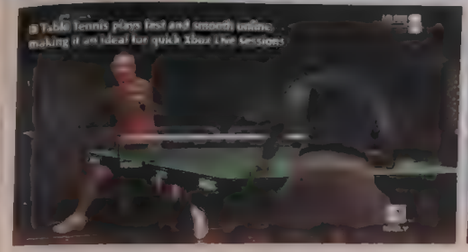


Table Tennis plays fast and smooth online, making it an ideal for quick Xbox Live sessions

XBOX 360

Table Tennis

> STYLE 1 OR 2-PLAYER SPORTS (2-PLAYER VIA XBOX LIVE) > PUBLISHER ROCKSTAR GAMES > DEVELOPER [illegible]
> RELEASE MAY 23 > ESRB E

BACK TO PONG

BOTTOM LINE 8

> Concept: [illegible]

> Graphics: [illegible]

> Sound: [illegible]

> Playability: [illegible]

> Entertainment: [illegible]

> Replay Value: [illegible]

Rockstar caught everyone by surprise with Table Tennis, which was announced a few months ago. Given the company's reputation for creating large-scale, adults-only epics like Grand Theft Auto and Manhunt, bringing out a new version of America's favorite old rec room pastime seemed a bit odd.

After now having put some serious time into the game, I have to say Rockstar is onto something. Table Tennis is sheer, simple fun, and might well be the killer party game that Xbox 360 owners have been waiting for. The control is accurate and responsive, lending itself well to lightning-fast volleys that will put your reflexes to the test. Although it is very straightforward, there is some skill and strategy involved in using spin, power, and soft shots. The only place in which the gameplay stumbles is the player movement, which can be a bit erratic and floaty.

Graphically, it's impressive, although not surprising given how little is going on in the environments. The character models are very realistic, given to sweating and outfitted in real-moving cloth physics. Although there are no real players (not that I'd recognize a pro table tennis player anyway), the characters cover the gamut of race, ethnicity, and sex, to often humorous results (Rockstar's English roots show in the game's [illegible]).

While [illegible] the gameplay package [illegible] two player or over Xbox Live where [illegible] soon be new favorite [illegible] disappointed that more effort wasn't put forth to make this game the [illegible] sports title. There's no [illegible] mode [illegible] speaking of [illegible] are few and [illegible] new shirts [illegible] [illegible] the future, perhaps the franchise could push its a[illegible] bent even further, going for silly, over-the-top items like the Hot Shots Golf series. However, despite its shallow nature, I'll still keep my copy of Table Tennis handy for when friends come over or when I'm looking for a fast, fun online experience. A good game that could have been great with a bit more effort.—**MATT**

The arc alternate [illegible]

Second Opinion 8.25

[illegible]

done.—KATO

XBOX 360 QUICKIES

8.75

[illegible] nils are [illegible] se of speed [illegible] arcade racer, because that would give short shrift to the skills needed to play this title as you meticulously manage your bike. I also have to give kudos to this game for adding challenges before each race that increase your overall abilities.—**KATO**

XBOX 360

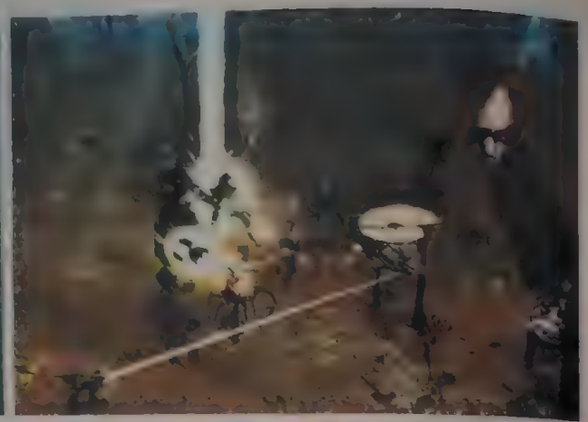
Hitman: Blood Money

> STYLE 1-PLAYER ACTION
> PUBLISHER [illegible]
> DEVELOPER [illegible]
> RELEASE [illegible] > ESRB [illegible]

BOTTOM LINE 7.75

[illegible]

LISA



PC

Rise of Nations: Rise of Legends

> STYLE [illegible] > PUBLISHER [illegible] > DEVELOPER [illegible] > RELEASE [illegible] > ESRB [illegible]

BOTTOM LINE 9.5

> Concept: Apply the outstanding Rise of Nations formula to a more fantastic setting – with brilliant results

> Graphics: If you've got the machine for it, this is a gorgeous game. If not, don't worry; it scales remarkably well, and can be played well even on a below-average PC

> Sound: This is the first title in some time to convince me to not have iTunes running in the background

> Playability: Pretty standard RTS controls work as smoothly as one could ask

> Entertainment: In a genre teeming with great titles, Rise of Legends stands out as one of the best ways to get out and conquer something

> Replay Value: High

Second Opinion 9.5

There's something absolutely satisfying about amassing a huge army of steam-driven mechanical spiders and heavily armed zeppelins to crush one's enemies. Rise of Legends is easily one of the most addictive games I've played in a long time, and every aspect of gameplay is even, but as compelling as the combat. The building, research, resource-gathering, and Risk-like overworld map are all subtlely integrated into one another, making for an incredibly smooth, polished experience. But what I admire most about Rise of Legends is how it manages to be incredibly accessible to players of all levels. Even RTS fanatics, despite offering a huge number of systems and tactics, the original Rise of Nations is one of my favorite RTS games of all time, and Rise of Legends achieves fun in a very, very, very similar way. [illegible] now. Bye. —JEREMY

MAKE YOUR OWN LEGEND

There's a certain level of basic enjoyment that bears every RTS released since Command & Conquer can quite easily aspire to. Building up a base and an army and then using them to crush your foes is a good time even if it's otherwise a fairly rote genre. Rise of Legends is not one of those titles. Instead, it illustrates how basic concepts like these can be taken to the next level through tight design and a [illegible] of polish, quality, and outright astonishing presentation – provided you have a beefy enough PC to take advantage of it – certainly doesn't hurt either.

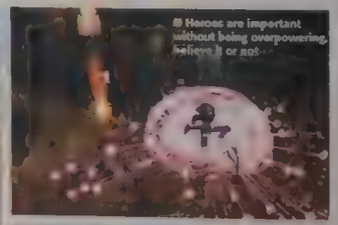
Not that Rise of Legends doesn't have any [illegible] was but an experienced RTS player has seen all the main facets of this game before. The groundbreaking [illegible] the genre's concepts from Rise of Nations have been refined, and each and every system and notion works so well both individually and together that the whole is truly greater than the sum of its parts. The resource-gathering structure puts an emphasis on exploration, while also encouraging players to keep upgrading their bases. Likewise, the design of the technology tree, with one starting nation of [illegible] different of each playable nation, rewards a more conservative or defensive approach without screwing over aggressive play styles. Finally, both the immensely entertaining combat and the composition of each troop set push gamers toward exploring the various types of units. It's a highly unique, [illegible] strategy that hinges on huge masses of a single unit, and it's [illegible] success.

> "Simply executed on a level that we rarely see"

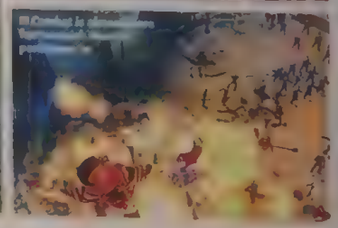
The single-player game offers a huge number of skirmish scenarios to enjoy in addition to the dozens of hours of playtime of its three excellent free-form campaigns, which allow you to direct a board game-like metagame in pursuit of your objectives. Multiplayer has some serious legs as well, with rankings for individuals and clans, extensive stat tracking, and a robust matchmaking service. If there's any fault to find in this title, it's that it doesn't advance the Rise of Nations or RTS formula as very much – but one could just as easily argue that it doesn't have to.

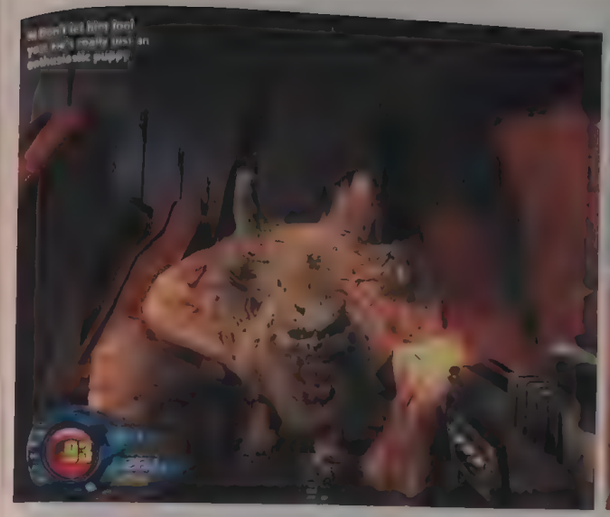
Everything about this title is simply executed on a level that we rarely see outside of a few elite development studios. If Rise of Legends is indicative of things to come, perhaps Big Huge Games is ready to join the likes of Valve, Blizzard, and Firaxis at the pinnacle of gaming. —ADAM

The three factions couldn't be any more different from each other



Heroes are important without being overpowering, believe it or not





PC

SiN Episodes: Emergence

> STYLE 1-PLAYER ACTION > PUBLISHER VALVE > DEVELOPER RITUAL ENTERTAINMENT > RELEASE MAY 9 > ESRB M

BOTTOM LINE 7.75

> Concept: [illegible]

> Graphics: The same look [illegible]

> Sound: [illegible]

> Playability: [illegible]

> Entertainment: [illegible] shooting things [illegible] have a good time

> Replay Value: Moderate

Second Opinion 7

[illegible] – REINER

IT IS WHAT IT IS

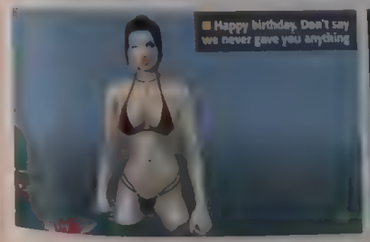
A lot of people from the business side of games are going to be watching this one closely. As the first high-profile game title to try the combination of episodic content with direct download, this could be the beginning of a new way to get your games. It's about the only thing about SiN that is likely to change the world in any measurable way, since the game content itself is very much in line with shooters we've all played before. Fortunately, it's the variety of FPS that anyone should be more than happy to enjoy again – non-stop action, constant explosions, and enemies that make up for their lack of intelligence by clever placement within the level and sheer force of numbers.

It's a familiar formula, but Ritual has gotten every part of the equation just right. You'll only be juggling a grand total of three different weapons (plus grenades), but each one is precise and fun to use – even if they are just variations on the classic FPS triumvirate of pistol, shotgun, and machine gun. Similarly, there certainly isn't an overflow of enemy types, but from the fodder ground troops to the jumping mutant freaks, they're each special in their own little way as a target for your lead. My personal favorite, incidentally, are those kooky, madcap jetpack soldiers – it never ceases to entertain when just a few bullets send them careening off into the side of a nearby building. Level design is totally solid, offering a nice variation of confined corridors and wide open construction zones and building lobbies. The rapid change-up of locations serves the title well in its quest to offer constant thrills throughout the short hours in which the game plays out.

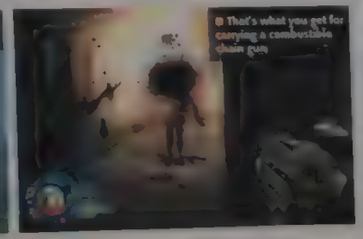
Depending on your skill and difficulty settings, you can expect one very full afternoon of gaming from this first episode, perhaps even a weekend if you don't marathon it. That's actually a good bit longer than I expected out of this first installment, and it's a testament to the game's quality that every minute of those few hours feels so intense. In a pattern I expect we'll see a lot more of in the coming years, the story hangs over an appropriately sized cliff at the end of the playthrough, and a "Next On SiN Episodes" trailer lets you in on what you can expect from part two.

The Source engine and its over-the-top physics serve the game quite well even if the technology on display is already starting to look a bit dated. And while the philosophy of blowing crap up for several hours certainly works in this first part of the plot, I do hope that we see some new directions in gameplay as the later episodes roll out.

If there's such a thing as a popcorn movie, this is the interactive equivalent – gratuitous T&A, over-the-top villains, barebones story, and a never-ending stream of expendable thugs blowing up to your heart's content. It's not going to win any literature awards, but damned if I can find anything about it that's not fun. —MILLER



Happy birthday. Don't say we never gave you anything



That's what you get for carrying a combustible chain gun

PC QUICKIES

PC

Paradise

> STYLE 1-PLAYER ADVENTURE
> PUBLISHER UBISOFT
> DEVELOPER WHITE BIRDS PRODUCTIONS
> RELEASE MAY 2 > ESRB T

BOTTOM LINE 5.25

[illegible] game does share one redeeming value with its creator's previous titles (the Syberia series, most notably): it's mighty pretty. Good looks and interesting creature design are the highlights, but I can honestly say that I've seen loading screens more involving than Paradise's long-winded tale. —LISA

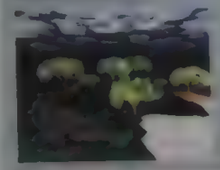
PC

Darwinia

> STYLE 1-PLAYER STRATEGY
> [illegible]
> RELEASE [illegible] > ESRB [illegible]

BOTTOM LINE 7.5

[illegible] ADAM



View Review

Video Games

Juiced

By showing off your modding and driving skills, you'll gain 'Respect' from the rival crew chiefs, and will soon be invited to their race events, challenge them to race 'for pinks' and bet against them for cash. As your notoriety grows, new drivers will ask to join your crew, opening up the never before seen 'crew races' where your skills at managing your drivers while you race are key to beating your rival crews.

MotoGP URT 3

The MotoGP series is the definitive motorcycle racing game for the Xbox and PC. The game accurately captures the excitement of Grand Prix motorcycle racing. This time, MotoGP 3 is taking the franchise to the extreme, expanding beyond the realms of Grand Prix [illegible] high adrenaline Str[illegible] hone their skills on [illegible] through the Gr[illegible]

Warhammer 40,000: Dawn of War

Ten thousand years have passed since the treasonous acts of Chaos toppled the Golden Age of mankind. Fires burn brightly throughout the galaxies, illuminating carnage and slaughter as mankind defends itself from ancient enemies. Control one of four unique races in head-to-head or cooperative [illegible] action, where faith, skill, a[illegible] in ruling the [illegible]

[illegible]

For the last 15 years the corrupt dictator, Sopot, has oppressed the people of the Commonwealth. His relentless pursuit of unification with the neighboring United Republic has left the country soaked in unnecessary bloodshed and poverty. Propaganda is plastered through communities and a Public Information Building, built as a tribute to the self-centered chancellor spews news broadcasts with claims of victory as more and more soldiers fall victim.

Big Mutha Truckers 2

Big Mutha Truckers 2 begins with Ma Jackson being taken into police custody for tax evasion. The only way she can win her case is by hiring Cousin Jacob, the most "fancy-talkin' legal fella" this side of Booger's Canyon. Players will be challenged to locate six jurors and raise the cash needed to bribe them to let Ma off by trucking, trading, wheeling and dealing.

Full Spectrum Warrior

Based on a Training Aid developed for the U.S. Army*, Full Spectrum Warrior is a squad-based, real-time combat game that allows players to experience the intensity and gritty realism of urban warfare. Featuring advanced AI, your squad will act like a highly trained infantry unit – with team members reactively responding to situations based on combat training and taking the appropriate formations based on combat situations.

Evergirl

Hit the town with your friends as you plan the hottest events and prepare for summer camp! Be an actress, train with the soccer team or throw an end of the year party! At everView, it's up to you!

MX vs. ATV Unleashed

Rainbow Studios has mastered ATV's, conquered motocross, and now redefines the genre they built on the PC. Rainbow Studios isn't the only one building anymore, as the MX vs ATV Unleashed franchise introduces a track editor for the first time, allowing players to create the ultimate off-road environments

PC

Heroes of Might & Magic V

> STYLE 1 TO 8-PLAYER STRATEGY (UP TO 8-PLAYER VIA INTERNET OR LAN) > PUBLISHER [illegible] > DEVELOPER [illegible]
> RELEASE MAY 23 > ESRB T

Sure, nobody plays with the camera zoomed to full [illegible] but at least it looks cool if you do.

Having a levelled-up hero is just as important as a big army.

RESURRECTION SUCCESSFUL

As fondly as many gamers may remember the first three 3DO-published entries in the Heroes of Might & Magic series, Heroes V can't get a free pass on its license alone. However, the game has come a long way from its horrendous beta, and has emerged as a bright beginning to Ubisoft's custodianship of the Might & Magic franchise. Some fairly serious level design problems prevent Heroes V from being the timeless classic that Heroes III is, but this title evolves the gameplay from that seminal entry enough to make it a worthy successor.

The accessible turn-based goodness that the series is known for is central to the design of Heroes V, and for that we should all be profoundly grateful. Developer Nival has done a fantastic job of identifying what makes Heroes fun – fast-paced battles, RPG-like leveling of your heroes, and a basic level of empire management – and keeping those core ideas intact, while iterating on them to make all of those aspects better than they ever have been. The diversity between the various factions has also long been a hallmark of the franchise, and once again, this element is alive and well in Heroes V. The gameplay foundation is just incredibly strong, and bodes very well for any future sequels.

Unfortunately the developer apparently didn't pay as much attention to the art of map design. The campaigns, though certainly offering enough depth to give gamers their money's worth, are saddled with several scenarios that just aren't much fun. Not only that, but these mediocre missions can drag on interminably – notably in the first campaign, which isn't any harder or more interesting than a tutorial, and can take upwards of a dozen hours to complete.

Most of the non-campaign scenarios are also fairly uninspired, and many gamers will be disappointed in the fact that there are only a handful that ship with the game – whereas previous Heroes titles came out of the box with literally dozens.

Complaints and rough spots aside, this is a very solid and enjoyable effort. Anyone with a penchant for raising huge armies of fantastic troops and crushing everything in their path while leveling up a commanding hero into a total death machine – and, let's face it, who doesn't like that? – will definitely be entertained here. If Ubisoft can keep this level of quality up, things can only get better for the beloved HoMM series in the future.

— ADAM

Bits of the [illegible] has its own distinctive look and gameplay style.

BOTTOM LINE 8.25

> Concept: [illegible]

> Graphics: [illegible]

> Sound: [illegible]

> Playability: [illegible]

> Entertainment: [illegible]

> Replay Value: [illegible]

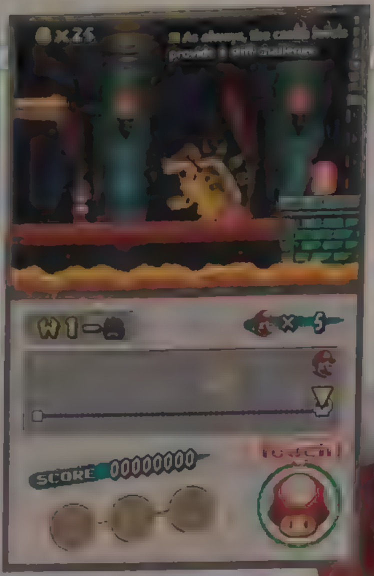
Second Opinion 7.5

[illegible]

— MILLER


Mario's not the only one who gets super-sized


[illegible] from past Mario games


As always, the castle levels provide a stiff challenge

BOTTOM LINE 9.25

> Concept: Mario returns to his heyday of side-scrolling platforming

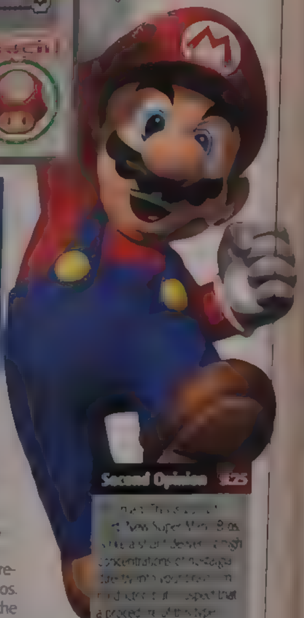
> Graphics: As always, it's vivid and colorful, and shows new touches like water effects and improved animation

> Sound: A score that emulates the great NES soundtracks of yore

> Playability: I didn't find all of the new abilities useful, but the core gameplay is stellar

> Entertainment: If, like me, you yearn for the days of NES, this will be one of the best games you play all year

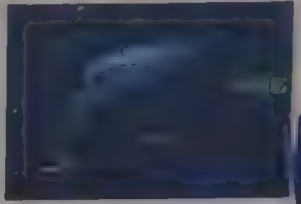
> Replay Value: Moderately High



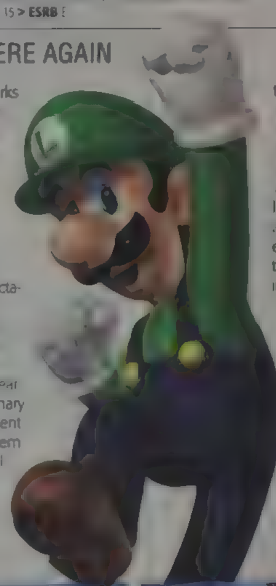
NINTENDO DS

New Super Mario Bros.

> STYLE 1-PLAYER ACTION/PLATFORM (2-PLAYER VIA WIRELESS) **> PUBLISHER** NINTENDO
> DEVELOPER NINTENDO **> RELEASE** MAY 15 **> ESRB** E



HAPPY DAYS ARE HERE AGAIN



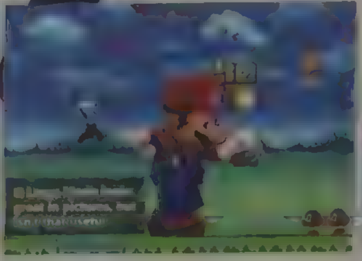
New Super Mario Bros. marks [illegible] games [illegible] new [illegible] platformer [illegible] the [illegible] on the map. It's the equivalent of a Beatles reunion [illegible] everybody's still alive and unsullied by our memories of crappy solo records. [illegible] a bit hard to separate my expectations of this game from the reality of playing, but honestly it feels like [illegible] school platforming.

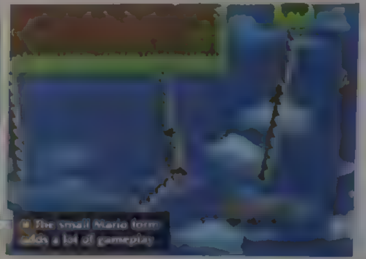
From a [illegible] standpoint, it's clear that this is intended to be a summary of the Mario games past and present. While the levels and overworld seem [illegible] Super Mario Bros. [illegible] the 3D games. There are a few new mushrooms as well: one which turns Mario very large and one which shrinks him, allowing him to access hidden areas and special pipes. [illegible] the large mushroom is [illegible] marginally useful. While large Mario essentially runs roughshod over the whole playfield, destroying blocks, platforms, and even pipes. It's cool the first few times, but it can destroy blocks that might be the key to hidden areas [illegible] usually attempt to save one until a boss battle, where it came in quite handy. The small mushrooms are incorporated [illegible] original games [illegible] like the butt slam and wall jump work well in this context. It will be hard to go back to the old games without wishing they were there.

As much as I appreciate the multiplayer and DS touch screen minigames that have been added, there's really only one reason why you must play this game. Quite simply, the 2D platformer, when done right, might still be the best damn style of game ever created. And believe me, New Super Mario Bros. does it very right. Everything I loved about the originals is here: the brilliantly designed levels, the memorable cast of enemies, the expert pacing, and the host of odd secrets to discover. This feels just like those games that made you fall in love with this hobby, overhauled with a few new moves and dramatically improved visuals. One could complain that it doesn't try to incorporate the touch screen to the degree that Super Princess Peach did, but I'm glad that Nintendo decided to remain true to the spirit of its greatest franchise. It might not be the huge [illegible] it would be, but this is a [illegible] and well-crafted trip down memory lane. **MATT**

Second Opinion 9.25

[illegible] New Super Mario Bros. [illegible] concentrations of nostalgia [illegible] a procedure of this type has some definite risks and rewards. Sure, there are new levels and a mash-up of earlier games' moves, and I am nothing short of delighted with the graphical tweaks, bounty of secret [illegible] design decisions, more [illegible] options, and [illegible] design. [illegible] would argue that this side-scroller offers more exploration, harder secrets, and [illegible] of discovery than any before [illegible] also feels a bit like you've done this before [illegible] good way [illegible] be sweet [illegible] [illegible] remember. —LISA


[illegible] great in pictures, but [illegible]


The small Mario form adds a lot of gameplay

PSP

Tomb Raider: Legend

> STYLE 1-PLAYER ACTION (2-PLAYER VIA AD HOC) **> PUBLISHER** EIDOS
> DEVELOPER CRYSTAL DYNAMICS **> RELEASE** MAY 23 **> ESRB** T

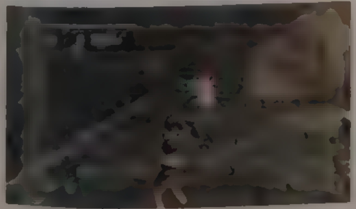
RAIDING A SMALLER TOMB

Over the past few years, Lara Croft went from the gaming equivalent of the girl that every guy wanted to date to the one that people avoided because of her bad reputation. Fortunately, Tomb Raider: Legend was a return to form, as the console game focused on what people originally loved about the series. Sticking as closely as possible to the console template, the PSP version of Legend is nearly as successful, with only a few expected concessions to make it function on the handheld.

By now, everyone who owns the system knows that the [illegible] differences between a console game and its PSP port are the loading, camera, and graphics. Legend [illegible] all three of these areas head on. The [illegible] PSP load times are handled especially well, with no loading in game. When you die, it takes about [illegible] seconds to boot up your last checkpoint, which is the longest the game ever keeps you waiting.

The camera system works almost as smoothly, which does a great job of staying behind you in most situations, and can be rotated freely by holding the square button and using the analog stick. However, sometimes it's difficult to line up a proper camera angle, resulting in botched jumps. While not perfect, it usually works fine, and remains one of the best cameras I've yet encountered on the PSP.

As for the graphics, they're remarkably similar to the PS2, though a bit less detailed. You'd be hard pressed to point out any huge disparities. In fact, this brings up an important question. Since the PSP version is so similar overall to the console game, do you really need to play both? Not really. But if you like to game on the go, Tomb Raider: Legend is a solid little addition to the PSP library, and an adventure that is worth experiencing on any console. —**JEREMY**



BOTTOM LINE 8.25

> Concept: Lara's latest game comes to PSP with a few tweaks, and remains largely faithful to the console version

> Graphics: Great environments and character models make for one fine-looking handheld title

> Sound: Keeley Hawes is great as Lara, and the rest of the cast is nearly as good

> Playability: The camera is the only real difference from the console version, and it's handled quite well

> Entertainment: The platforming and exploration are [illegible], but the gunplay and vehicular segments are a bit flaky

> Replay Value [illegible]

Second Opinion 8

The first lady of adventure is back. Lara Croft's PSP variant of Legend is great fun and so close to the console version that its biggest problem might be convincing console people to play through the game a second time. If you skipped the big boy version of Lara [illegible] this renaissance [illegible] fresh look at Tomb Raiding adventures that smartly steals from more recent entries in the genre, mostly Prince [illegible] and the [illegible] selection from [illegible] [illegible] of exploration. —LISA

HANDHELD QUICKIES

PSP

The Legend of Heroes II

> STYLE [illegible]
> PUBLISHER NAMCO BANDAI
> DEVELOPER [illegible]
> RELEASE [illegible]

BOTTOM LINE 6

[illegible] of Heroes [illegible] RPG with [illegible] if you're [illegible] over the last years [illegible] have any [illegible] basic and easy, and [illegible] exactly full of surprises. [illegible] the other elements work pretty well, like the colorful visuals and funny dialogue. As a whole, the experience is definitely tailored to role-playing newcomers. I can't say that any one aspect of the game is broken or terrible, but I also can't think of a single thing it does to make it worth your time. —**JOE**

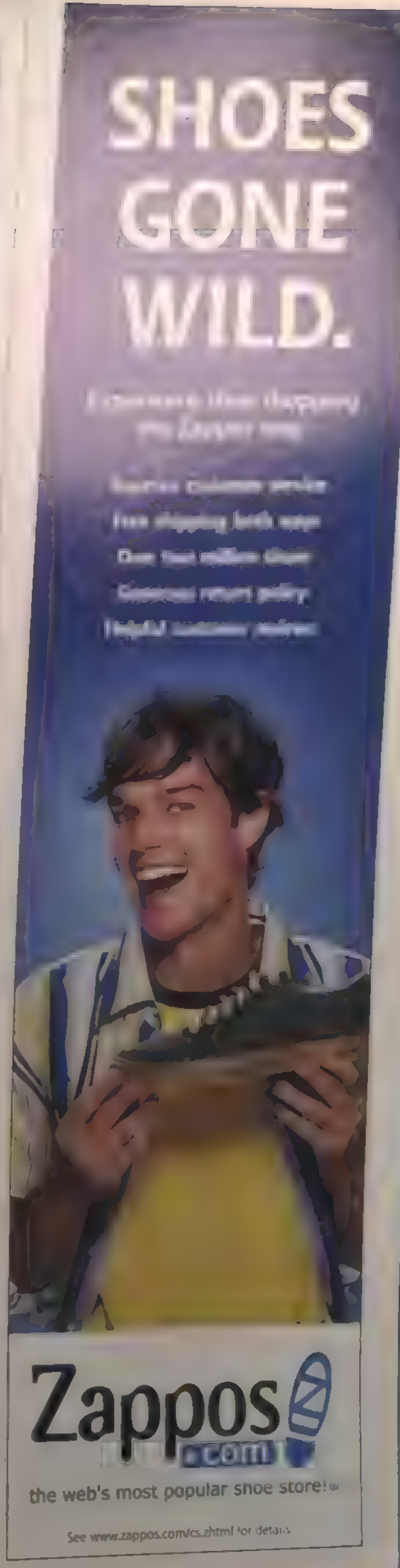
PSP

Lemmings

> STYLE 1-PLAYER PUZZLE
> PUBLISHER [illegible] MASTER ENTERTAINMENT AMERICA
> DEVELOPER TEAM 17
> RELEASE MAY 23 **> ESRB** E

BOTTOM LINE 7.25

This new PSP entry in the well-loved franchise offers more of the same we've come to expect, albeit with an upbeat and [illegible] soundtrack and enough new levels to bring in returning players. [illegible] levels [illegible] as well as the downloadable levels that will arise [illegible] as a result. As for gameplay, nothing much has changed, and the well-designed PSP control scheme remains largely invisible to your conscious concerns, just the way [illegible] here [illegible] game, as fun or frustrating as you remember. —**MILLER**



CHARTS

An In-Depth Listing Of The Best Selling Games

TOP 20

Listings Based Upon NPD Data For April 2006 Based On Units Sold

1 KINGDOM HEARTS II (PS2)

[illegible]

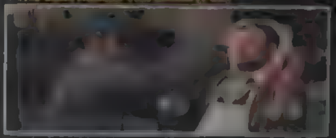
2 GHOST RECON ADVANCED WARFIGHTER (360)

[illegible]

3 THE ELDER SCROLLS IV: OBLIVION (360)

[illegible]

4 THE GODFATHER: THE GAME (PS2)



[illegible]

5 GOD OF WAR (PS2)

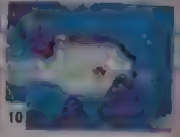
[illegible]

1	Kingdom Hearts II	1	[illegible]	9	[illegible]	$50
2	Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter	[illegible]	360	9.5	03-06	$59
3	The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion	[illegible]	360	[illegible]	03-06	$60
4	The Godfather: The Game	[illegible]	PS2	7.5	[illegible]	$49
5	God of War	10	PS2	10	[illegible]	$20
6	MLB '06: The Show	8	PS2	7.5	03-06	$40
7	Major League Baseball 2K6	N/A	360	7	04-06	$60
8	Major League Baseball 2K6	N/A	PS2	8.5	04-06	$40
9	Tourist Trophy: The Real Riding Simulator	N/A	PS2	8.5	04-06	$40
10	Battlefield 2: Modern Combat	N/A	360	7.25	04-06	$60
11	Tomb Raider: Legend	N/A	360	[illegible]	04-06	$60
12	Major League Baseball 2K6	N/A	XBOX	8.5	04-06	$40
13	Tomb Raider: Legend	N/A	PS2	[illegible]	04-06	$49
14	Brain Age: Train Your Brain in Minutes a Day!	N/A	DS	[illegible]	04-06	$20
15	Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas	[illegible]	PS2	10	[illegible]	$20
16	NBA Ballers: Phenom	N/A	PS2	[illegible]	[illegible]	$40
17	Kingdom Hearts	N/A	PS2	[illegible]	[illegible]	$20
18	Ice Age 2: The Meltdown	N/A	PS2	N/A	[illegible]	[illegible]
19	Fight Night Round 3	[illegible]	360	[illegible]	[illegible]	$59
20	Metroid Prime: Hunters	[illegible]	DS	[illegible]	[illegible]	$35

TOP 10 JAPAN

Rank	Title	System
1	Powerful Major League Baseball	PS2
2	Tetris DS	DS
3	DS Training for Adults: Work Your Brain 2	DS
4	Winning Eleven 10	PS2
5	DS Training for Adults: Work Your Brain	DS
6	Animal Crossing: Wild World	DS
7	Eigo Tsuke	DS
8	Pokémon Ranger: Diamond-Pearl	DS
9	Dragon Quest: Young Yangus and the Mysterious Dungeon	PS2
10	Mother 3	GBA

9



10

TOP 10 GB

1	New Super Mario Bros.	N/A	DS
2	The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion	1	360
3	Rise of Nations: Rise of Legends	N/A	PC
4	Tomb Raider: Legend	4	Multi
5	Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter	[illegible]	360
6	Heroes of Might & Magic V	N/A	PC
7	Syphon Filter: Dark Mirror	[illegible]	PSP
8	Table Tennis	N/A	360
9	Metroid Prime: Hunters	[illegible]	[illegible]
10	Lemmings	N/A	PSP

3

7

TOP 10 PC

1	Guild Wars: Factions	N/A	$49
2	The Sims 2: Family Fun Stuff	N/A	[illegible]
3	The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion	[illegible]	$45
4	World of WarCraft	5	$19
5	The Sims 2	9	[illegible]
6	The Sims 2: Open for Business	1	$35
7	Final Fantasy XI: Treasures of Aht Urhgan	N/A	$29
8	Star Wars: Empire at War	[illegible]	$49
9	Age of Empires III	10	$49
10	Battlefield 2: Modern Combat	N/A	$46

REVIEWS ARCHIVE

The Really Ugly Page Where You Can See Lots Of Old Review Scores

XBOX 360

Kameo: Elements of Power · Xbox 360 · Jan 06

Burnout Revenge	9.5	Apr-06
Call of Duty 2	8.75	Dec-05
Condemned: Criminal Origins	[illegible]	Dec-05
Dead or Alive 4	9	Mar-06
Dynasty Warriors 5: Empires	6	May-06
Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion, The	9.5	May-06
Far Cry Instincts: Predator	8.75	Jun-06
Fight Night Round 3	9	Mar-06
Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter	9.5	Apr-06
Need for Speed: Most Wanted	9	Jan-06
NHL 2K6	8.5	Jan-06
Outfit, The	7.75	Apr-06
Perfect Dark Zero	7	Jan-06
Peter Jackson's King Kong	8.5	Jan-06
Project Gotham Racing 3	8.5	Jan-06
Quake 4	7.75	Jan-06
Ridge Racer 6	7.5	Jan-06

PLAYSTATION 2

24: The Game	7.5	Apr-06
25 to Life	5.75	Mar-06
2006 FIFA World Cup	8.5	Jun-06
[illegible] Bulletproof	6	Feb-06
Aeon Flux	7.25	Jan-06
America's Army: Rise of a Soldier	6.5	Feb-06
Ape Escape 3	8.75	Feb-06
Blitz: The League	7.75	Nov-05
Karaoke Revolution Country	8	Apr-06
Dance Dance Revolution Extreme 2	7.5	Nov-05
Dance Factory	8	Jun-06
Devil Kings	6.5	Nov-05
Devil May Cry 3: Dante's Awakening Special Edition	9	Feb-06
[illegible] Journey of the Cursed King	8.75	Dec-05
Drakengard 2	7.25	Mar-06
[illegible] Legends	6.75	Dec-05
Sonic Riders	5	Apr-06
Soul Calibur III	9	Dec-05
SSX On Tour	8	Nov-05
State Of Emergency 2	5	Apr-06
Steambot Chronicles	5.5	May-06
Suikoden Tactics	6.75	Dec-05
Tokyo Extreme Racer Drift	6	Apr-06
Tourist Trophy: The Real Riding Simulator	8.5	May-06
Trapt	6.75	Dec-05
Wallace & Gromit: Curse of the Were-Rabbit	7	Nov-05
Warriors, The	8.25	Nov-05
Warship Gunner 2	5	Apr-06
Winning Eleven 9	8.5	Feb-06
Without Warning	6.5	Nov-05
X-Men Legends II: Rise of Apocalypse	[illegible]	Nov-05

The Matrix: Path of Neo · PS2 · Dec 05

GAMECUBE

[illegible]

XBOX

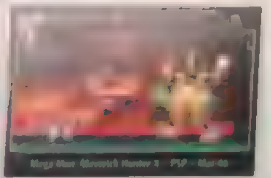
[illegible]

PC

[illegible] · PC · Jan 06

NINTENDO DS

[illegible]



Mega Man Maverick Hunter X · PSP · Mar 06

GAME BOY ADVANCE

[illegible]

Rise of Nations: Rise of Legends

Mastering the Factions

By game designer Paul Stephenson and art lead Rodney Sumner

GENERAL TIPS

If you have your hero in play, keep upgrading him or her. If you forget, when your level two hero meets your opponent's level four hero, expect to lose the battle.

Use your Dominances! They aren't powerful, but they can turn the tide of a close battle. And watch the indicators – if you're in danger of losing your Dominance, use it quick!

Even one point of damage will halt the building of new Districts at a City or the repair of a damaged building. Don't let the enemy strengthen his buildings while you have troops around!

PLAYING ALIN

Use Whirling Blades to run quickly across large stretches of map, you don't have to use the mode just for fighting, although it's useful when you have local superiority.

Scorpions are a powerful trample unit. While your target is knocked down, however, they can't take trample damage again, so stop and give them a poison sting while they get up.

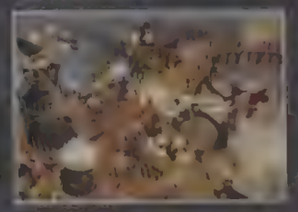
Instead of bribing sites, try using your early gold for lots of Heartseekers. They have a powerful ranged attack and can really turn the tide of an early battle.

Juvenile Salamanders can be a great way to open your military strategy. The enemy rarely expects them! If you do get an Eternal Flame and upgrade your Fire Circles to produce Adult Salamanders as soon as you reach Large City.

Fire Elementals are good at killing medium and large targets like Clockwork Men and Heroes. Watch out for the Spiders!

Sand Dragons are very powerful and have anti-air splash. If you have a good Timonium income and the opponent is using lots of flyers, consider getting to Great City sooner rather than later to get access to these units.

Upgrades are vital. Make sure to give your troops enhancements as soon as you can spare the resources. Even if you're concentrating on a land army, consider building an Eternal Flame at your biggest mine. It will help protect against flying raids, and it has a ranged attack upgrade that affects all Alin units.



[illegible]

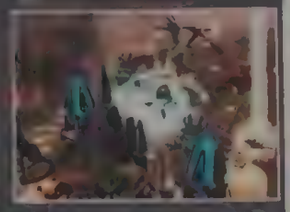
Don't forget your Shields and Cloak! Early shields are quite limited, but it's like having 20 extra health, so don't forget to use it. Use cloak as a unit is nearing 1/5 health (no lower – jump in the air when the Cloak is turned on will still hit for damage) to remove that unit from combat and send it to the rear to heal.

If you have an extra Holy Ark, they don't stack healing; so use the other one to Channel a unit production building or a mine. Every little bit helps.

Sun Idols are expensive Large City units, but their trample will totally eliminate a non-upgraded enemy soldier unit. One of these can take on four to six soldiers without suffering too much damage if the targets are Cuoti or Vinci.

Because of Holy Ark healing, massing troops vital for the Cuoti. If you can keep incoming damage to a minimum, the Holy Ark can counteract it. And if the enemy focuses fire on one target, cloak it!

The Cuoti receive energy income only from owned sites, so seize Neutrals as quickly as possible to start building a good economic base.



The Jaguar can strike up to four soldiers with one blow, but as a soldier unit wears out, the Jaguar deals less and less overall damage. Consider switching targets and letting another unit mop up the soldier remnants.

PLAYING VINCI

The Vinci are so flexible it's hard to focus on just a few strategies. Try to limit your Research Lab upgrades and Prototype picks to those things that complement your strategy. For example, Giacomo/Clockwork Sniper/Timonium Smelter is one path to try. Or Doge/Siege Zeppelin/Doge Statue is another. Trying to mix both will dilute your power.

Use Volley Fire when you have numerical superiority against a slow-moving foe. It can be devastating. Siege attack is not increased by Volley Fire, so don't bother using it against buildings.

Clockwork Spiders are very powerful, & expensive. They can trample soldiers while firing on the move against buildings or air targets. Don't forget to web the enemy.

Like the Jaguar, Clockwork Men can strike up to four soldiers with one blow, but as a soldier unit wears out, the Clockwork Man deals less and less overall damage. Consider switching targets and letting another unit mop up the soldier remnants.

Speaking of Clockwork Men, don't forget the special Clockwork Built Keep groups of Clockwork Men close to each other for extra healing and attack power.

Juggernauts are powerful, but are by no means king of the battlefield. Unsupported, they can be wiped out quicker than you think. Keep one or two with a support army, and you can force on the move against enemy heroes and large units while trampling any number of ranged soldiers.

Mod World

WORLD OF WARCRAFT – INTERFACE CUSTOMIZATION

New players show up in Azeroth every day, and as most any WoW vet can tell you, running some interface mods can make your adventuring life much smoother. These aren't cheats; they all run within the framework that Blizzard specifically provides for mods. But by adding some non-essential information and emphasizing the stuff you need to know right now, tailoring your interface to your own needs and playstyle can be immensely helpful.

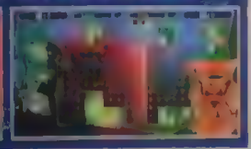
Probably the best place for rookies to start is by picking up one of the major compilations. CTmod (www.ctmod.net) and Cosmos (www.cosmosui.org) each offer fairly comprehensive options with a single download. Smaller mods that several GI staffers swear by, like TitanPanel and Scrolling Combat Text, seem like they make little impact on the game until patch day comes and you realize how much you miss them.

There are literally thousands of WoW UI mods available for free download on the Net, and only by reading around a little can you really get your interface tuned to your liking. Most of them can be found by browsing through the database at worldofwar.net and www.curseforge.com. Though some slip through the cracks. The official UI & Macros forum at forums.worldofwarcraft.com is a great

Live Arcade Spotlight

Lumines Live!

To say that we're excited about the prospect of a Live-enabled version of Lumines would be more than a little understatement. Easily one of the richest and most engrossing puzzlers in years, Lumines will be making its jump this summer from the PSP screen onto XBLA. While the new 360 version will sport much of the same content, you'll now be able to download new songs, puzzles, and skins, including exclusive music videos, like the Madonna song that was shown off at E3. In addition to the previously playable game modes, the new Mission mode challenges players to clear a certain sequence of blocks within a set number of moves. Perhaps most importantly, Lumines Live will offer full online competitive options, including leaderboards. If that weren't enough, the mesmerizing music of the game is being presented in full 5.1 surround sound. Now excuse us. We need to go shake our bodies down to the ground in preparation.



Code of the Month

Getting Up: Contents Under Pressure

If there's one thing life has taught us, it's that game is going to save the world. Don't let "The Man" keep you down, man. All you need is a spiky fan and a relatively smooth wall and you have the power to enact change. Can we get a "Hell yeah!"? No? Oh. Okay. Well, here's a bunch of codes for the cool Platforming Graffiti Brawler Action game to come out in, well, ever. At the Game Information screen you'll need to go to Options. From there, head to Codes and type in your desired cheat. If you get sick of the effect, enter the code a second time to turn it off.

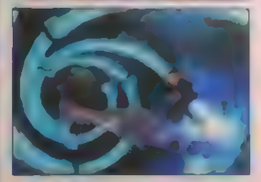
Infinite Health – MARCUSECKOS
Infinite Skills – FLIPTHESCRIPT
Max Health – BABYLONSRUST
Max Skills – FANCYMCLISTER
Unlock All Art – SWOLEY
Unlock All Black Book Graffiti & The Bush Pieces – STARBISOFCLASS
Unlock All Combat Upgrades – DOGTAG1
Unlock All iPod Songs – GRANGMACLISA
Unlock All Legends – NINESIX
Unlock All Levels – IPULATOR
Unlock All Movies – DEXTER CROWLEY
Unlock All Versus Characters – STATEYOURNAME

Patrick Moore
Miami, FL

Attention All Cheaters!

[illegible]

MULTI-SYSTEM



X-Men The Official Game

XBOX 360 PLAYSTATION 2 XBOX

Unlock Iceman's Danger Room Level – Up (x2), Left (x2), Down, Up, A, X
Unlock Nightcrawler's Danger Room Level – Up (x2), Down (x2), Right, Start
Unlock Wolverine's Danger Room Level – [illegible]

XBOX 360

Rumble Roses XX

"Fantasia" Intro Song – During any Queen Match, wait until you reach the "VS" screen, then press and hold RT and then press A.
Swap Ring Entrances – [illegible]

PS2

Black

[illegible]

Unlock MSAW (BFG) – [illegible]

XBOX

Black

[illegible]

Unlock MSAW (BFG) – [illegible]

BOOK EXCERPT:

DEAN TAKAHASHI'S THE XBOX 360 UNCLOAKED

Dean Takahashi has been one of gaming's most respected journalists and writers over the past decade. His book Opening the Xbox *is considered by many to be the definitive history of Microsoft's entry into the video game console battle. With the Xbox 360 currently on store shelves, Takahashi is releasing his newest work,* The Xbox 360 Uncloaked, *a well-researched and compelling tome that takes us from the genesis of the Xbox 360 project to the current day. Reading it is like being a fly on the wall at Microsoft HQ, as we see all the battles, obstacles, and strife that comes with creating a new game console. This month we're pleased to be running an excerpt of the book, Chapter 22, entitled "Gears of War." This chapter details how Epic joined forces with Microsoft to create the system's most anticipated new property, and also how a deal with rival developer Valve Software (Half-Life) was scuttled at the last minute.*

CHAPTER 22

Gears Of War

At the 2003 Game Developers Conference, Epic was showing off a new graphics engine. The demo showed incredible details of monstrous characters that were properly lit by all the right sources of illumination, as if there really were a sun or a lantern shining light in exactly the right places, producing all the right shadows. A Microsoft business development manager, Jim Veevaert, saw the demo. He pressed Mark Rein, vice president of marketing at Epic, for details.

"I was interested in pursuing a war franchise, and the technology was very impressive," Veevaert said. "I knew there was a great game in the works."

Rein said that it was a new version of Unreal which had the working title of Unreal Warfare. Veevaert wanted to sign it up for the Xbox 360. In the subsequent weeks, Rein and Epic business chief Jay Wilbur negotiated to free the Unreal Warfare property from the publisher that Epic had found for it.

Everyone at Epic wanted to expand beyond the Unreal franchise. [Star designer] Cliff Bleszinski [a.k.a. CliffyB – ed.] in particular needed to stretch his wings. He had almost quit Epic Games after the first Unreal Tournament debuted. He wanted to work on a new property, something, ironically, more epic. He loved horror games such as the Silent Hill and Resident Evil series, where fear was the prevailing emotion.


Dean Takahashi was granted unprecedented access to Microsoft employees in writing both his Xbox Books

"Remember that phrase about how 'the only thing we have to fear is fear itself'?," he said. "I say, 'Fear, it sells.'"

Since high school, he had wanted to make a game he called Over Fiend, a horror game where a character lost his wife to demons in a post-modern city. It was a single-player story-based game, in contrast to Epic's multiplayer online melees. John Carmack, the graphics wizard at Epic's rival, id Software, had once said that a story in a first-person shooter game was as gratuitous as a story in a porn flick. CliffyB thought that notion was ludicrous.

"This is a medium that can be used to tell stories," he said.

But he didn't get a chance to prove Carmack wrong. More Unreal sequels came along. CliffyB adjusted himself to market conditions. One of the sequels coming was a title called Unreal Warfare, a game that would allow players to engage in huge battles with ultra-modern marines in realistic terrain. But the team at Epic was getting overloaded, so they stopped work on Unreal Warfare in order to ship Unreal Tournament 2004.

One of CliffyB's programmers suggested they switch the Unreal Warfare game to a second-person view, with a perspective where the gamer could see the character that he or she was playing, as if they were just behind and looking over the shoulder of the character. CliffyB liked the idea and wanted to use it with Unreal Warfare. When he saw videos for Capcom's upcoming horror game, Resident Evil 4, he saw how the second-person view looked in practice. "That's totally the way to go," he said. "We had to go to this view because the character would look so f—— great."

The game, now code-named Project Warfare, would be very different from Epic's previous fast-action shooter games. Its pace would be slower than the typical first person shooter. The character would partially obscure the view of the player. By this time, the graphics team had a graphics engine, and CliffyB had pieces of a story. In some ways, CliffyB said, "It was the tail wagging the dog." He started thinking about all of the things he wanted to say. He had been stunned by the fall of the World Trade Center towers in 2001. He was struck with the notion that a surprise attack could bring down something so grand. The ruins of a cathedral reminded him of the last scene of the film *Planet of the Apes*, where Charlton Heston comes upon a fallen Statue of Liberty. He recalled the hysteria about Anthrax and people going to buy duct tape to protect themselves against terrorist chemical warfare attacks. The idea of "destroyed beauty" stayed with him, and it mixed with the demons from Over Fiend. CliffyB wanted to call it Apex


Microsoft was looking for the game that might be the Halo of the Xbox 360, and Gears of War seemed to be a perfect fit.

War, after a sleepy suburban town near where he lived in Raleigh, N.C. He thought of ruined cities during World War II, where soldiers had to take shots and hide under cover, rather than run with guns blazing through the streets.

CliffyB had admired "Halo," which did have some smart enemies. The game had taken the first-person shooter genre from the PC and moved it to the console with grace. CliffyB had been frustrated with the hassles of the PC, and he wanted a console experience. He had to talk the rest of the team into it. One thing that helped him in his quest to do a new kind of game was that the Unreal brand had been associated with the PC. It hadn't worked really well on the consoles yet.

One phrase that stuck with him was "The gears of war are lubricated with the blood of soldiers." It brought to bear the image he had in mind. He did a search on the name, Gears of War, and found an anime comic fan owned the web site. Epic made an offer to buy it and obtained the rights. Now that CliffyB had a game in mind, he became impatient to do it. He knew that Halo 2 was running late. He could extrapolate that Microsoft would need something else to launch with its next console. He knew that gamers with a new console would want something "bad ass."

"I got impatient," he said. "I wanted to go, go, go."

Tim Sweeney's demo at the GDC was the groundwork that he needed for his new graphics engine, Unreal Engine 3, which would power the intricately detailed characters and scenes in the games. The engine would feature the kind of spectacular graphics that Sweeney and his programmers and artists loved to create. Among the highlights was something called "high dynamic range." That meant that the graphics would illuminate a wide range of bright images and dark images in the same picture. The resulting effect on realism would be stunning. They didn't know for sure, but they had made a bet that the kind of graphics they were creating would be perfect for Microsoft's next game console.

In March, 2003, Epic merged with Scion Studios, a start-up which had been working with Epic on derivative titles. The company needed a new building and Sweeney had decided that now was the time to dramatically expand. In contrast to boutique studios such as id Software in Mesquite, Texas, Epic recognized that game development was becoming so complex that it needed bigger teams and budgets.

The company finally had enough people to feed the Unreal franchise and start new titles as well. They then pitched the game as a story-based shooter that had the horror elements that CliffyB wanted to have.

"It was clear that the game Cliff and the gang were making was going to be different and that we should break it out as a new intellectual property," Sweeney said.

As CliffyB and his team refined the concept, the story

took shape. It was an original science-fiction title where mankind was engaged in insane wars, only to fall victim to a surprise attack on "emergence day," as a subterranean monster race surfaces. It was the game that CliffyB always wanted to do. CliffyB created a universe behind the game with foul creatures, destroyed cities, and massive humans who looked like bodybuilders decked out in body armor. The main characters were two buddy marines who would fight together. The story would unfold with "forced looks," which were canned cinematic sequences that forced the characters to look in a certain direction where they could see a piece of the plot unfold. These sequences would fit seamlessly within the actual game play. CliffyB now had enough material for a whole trilogy of games. The company filed dozens of trademark names for the game, some of them red herrings to throw off spies. One of the names was Gears of War.


Taking cover was one of CliffyB's key themes in making Gears of War

CliffyB went to Redmond to make his pitch. On the morning of the presentation, he was nervous. He did 60 push-ups. In the meeting with Microsoft's game studio brass, he had to convince [Mircosoft's] Ken Lobb that the new mode of fighting, dubbed cooperative mode, would work if there were two players and one got ahead of the other.

The Microsoft planners negotiated for an exclusive. Epic wanted a big check to get the development going. Epic's Mark Rein was also dangling something else interesting in front of Microsoft. Sweeney was busy at work on his next graphics engine, the underlying code that would be able to render outstanding graphics that exploited the best technology in just about any platform, PC or game console. If Epic came on board, it could also encourage its licensees for its engine to come on board with the Xbox 360. And that meant that dozens of developers might make games for the Xbox 360. Epic never considered taking the Gears of War title to Sony, which hadn't even begun to court developers for the PlayStation 3.

"Microsoft showed a lot of enthusiasm for it," Rein said. "What makes or breaks a game is marketing. If a publisher wants a game bad enough and it's strategic to them, they will spend the money on marketing to get the game the attention."

Epic had its fans inside Microsoft. Studio manager Bonnie Ross and ATG chief Laura Fryer loved the idea. In fact, she liked it so much she used the game as an excuse to leave the Advanced Technology Group and shift back into game production as a producer working with Epic. Scott Henson, one of J. Allard's buddies and a former boss on Xbox Live, filled the gap at ATG and replaced her. [Microsoft Game Studios head] Ed Fries liked the pitch, but he was also entertaining another pitch from a hometown company. Valve LLC, run by former Microsoft programmer Gabe Newell, had scored big over the years with hits such as Half-Life and (through a modified version of Half-Life) Counter-Strike. Valve was finishing up work on Half-Life 2 for the PC and had decided to do a version of that game for the Xbox. Now Newell wanted to know if Fries wanted a new Valve game for the Xbox 360.

Jay Wilbur, who ran business operations for Epic Games, had to do the negotiating, taking calls at all hours or at his kid's baseball game back in Raleigh. Microsoft wanted it as a launch title, but Epic knew it wouldn't be done in time for a 2005 debut, even with a year and a half to prepare and 30 people on the team.

John Kimmich, the trusty planner who signed up Bungie, came to Fries with both deals at about the same time. Fries remembered weighing the proposals from both companies. They were going to require expensive advances from Microsoft. And Fries didn't really have the political capital to do both deals. Valve was a tough company to work with, since it was developing its own online game distribution network dubbed Steam. Valve wanted the right to sell as many games as it wanted through Steam. It would compete with its own publisher for consumers in that sense. The deal was very difficult to swallow. Valve wanted the publisher to foot the bill for the game development, but take a small percentage of the profits. It was going to compete with the publisher's retail sales via Steam. And it was never clear when Valve would finish a game, given its track record.

Fries weighed both titles, holding stacks of contract papers in each hand at the same time. He looked at Epic on one hand, and Valve on the other. He decided, and he tossed the Valve deal in the garbage can. Those who heard about this decision later shook their heads and wondered why Fries didn't spend some of Microsoft's billions on both deals. It seemed like a case where Microsoft was Goliath, but it felt like it was David. ■■■


In addition to the game itself, Microsoft hoped to promote Epic's Unreal 3 Engine as a good development platform for 360

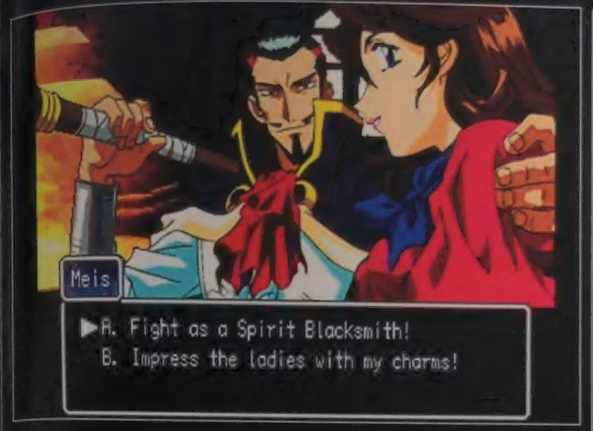
GREATEST GAME OF ALL TIME
by Kevin Reichel

ADVANCE WARS SERIES
> FORMAT GBA, NINTENDO DS
> PUBLISHER NINTENDO

We all have our greatest game of all time; many people find it hard to pick just one. For me there is only Advance Wars. For many moons I played only first-person shooters. Then there was light. It was the backlight of my Nintendo DS. I bought a DS new so that I could play Advance Wars 1 and 2 and eventually Advance Wars DS. Advance Wars is a turn-based strategy game that places you in the shoes of the commanding officer of a fictional army. Move your army turn by turn and advance on your enemy's position. The game can vaguely be compared to chess. The battlefield is a grid and you play from a bird's eye view. There is a huge selection of units available; each one has its own stats and abilities. There are units for every tactical purpose, which leaves an endless number of strategies you can use to defeat your foe. To compound this there is a huge selection of commanding officers with different personalities. Their personalities are reflected on their units, who have strengths and weaknesses unique to their CO. Because of its simplicity, the AI can be very challenging. Making one miscalculated move can cause a ripple of mistakes. When you first play Advance Wars you might notice the catchy tunes. There is one for each commanding officer and a handful of others. I love the Advance Wars music in all of its MIDI glory. The sound is not done justice by the DS speakers; you must have a nice set of headphones to rock out righteously. The storyline can be a bit cheesy at times, but that's not why I'm here. If I want a good story, I will read a book. I play Advance Wars to keep my mind sharp. I believe anyone can chase aliens around with the trigger held down. Not everyone can handle Advance Wars. And those select few who can master the art of AW can challenge themselves to infinity with the Hard Campaign. Once you have taste for blood you will seek out others like you. AW has a great multiplayer set up. You can make your own maps, trade them with friends, and challenge them to a variety of game types as well. I partake in a daily 7 a.m. Advanced Wars ritual. After work (graveyard shift), I stop over at my friend's house where three comrades await me. The DS offers wireless multiplayer games with no strings attached. I am considered "elite" on a few titles for Xbox amongst my friends, but I believe that no gamer is "elite" until they can master strategy games. In conclusion, Advance Wars is chess on crack that you can play with three other people.

THIS MONTH IN GAMING HISTORY

In July of 1999, video game pioneer Nolan Bushnell began a new venture called uWink, a company that planned to create a "media bistro" where patrons would order via touch screens at their tables and compete in multiplayer gaming and other activities. In some ways, the venture sought to combine Bushnell's two most prominent successes from his past – Atari and Chuck E. Cheese, a chain of theme arcade pizza restaurants.



PSONE

THOUSAND ARMS

> STYLE 1-PLAYER ROLE-PLAYING GAME > PUBLISHER ATLUS > DEVELOPER RED COMPANY > RELEASE 1999


RETRO RATING NOW 7.75 THEN* 7.75

It's difficult to find a role-playing game that doesn't integrate some kind of love story between the protagonist and an innocent lass, but Thousand Arms takes the concept to a whole new level. Your noble young hero, in addition to saving the world from evil, is also a big fan of the ladies. A really big fan. More than just a character quirk, this trait becomes a key gameplay element; in order to upgrade your weapons, you need to be on good terms with your many female party members. You endear yourself to them through sweet-talking, gift-giving, and even going on dates. The smoother you are, the more upgrades you can apply to your gear. Apart from the romance, however, Thousand Arms is nothing special. The quirky humor is good for a few laughs, but the battle system and story don't even compare well to its contemporaries, much less withstand the test of time. Even so, if you love dating sims and RPGs, this is one of the only places you can get both in one neat package.

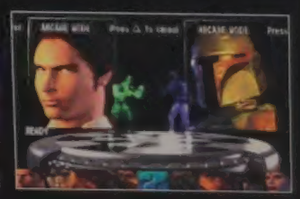
PSONE

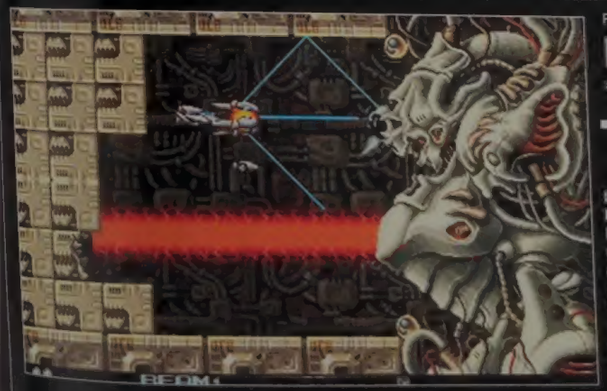
STAR WARS: MASTERS OF TERAS KASI

> STYLE 1 OR 2-PLAYER FIGHTING > PUBLISHER LUCASARTS > DEVELOPER LUCASARTS > RELEASE 1997


RETRO RATING NOW 5 THEN* 6.75

No matter how awesome that final lightsaber battle between Obi-Wan and Anakin was, there will always be things in the Star Wars universe that will give the haters plenty of ammunition. Masters of Teras Kasi is one of them. You know your fighting game is in trouble when one of your secret characters is Jodo Kast, a total poseur who sort of looks like Boba Fett. It doesn't help that the game's mechanics are about as fun as being shoulder-deep in a Rancor's butt – the combos are needlessly complex, and the characters are hilariously unbalanced. Not that a Tusken Raider should be able to beat Darth Vader in single combat, but from a gameplay perspective, it just gets old mowing through a line-up of inferior opponents. Add in unwieldy controls and a half-assed weapon system, and Masters of Teras Kasi ends up being faintly reminiscent of a good fighting game – except that it has been twisted and perverted by the foul energies of the Dark Side.





PSONE

R-TYPES

> STYLE 1 OR 2-PLAYER SHOOTER > PUBLISHER ASCII ENTERTAINMENT > DEVELOPER IREM > RELEASE 1999


RETRO RATING NOW 6.5 THEN N/A

There is a definite appeal to the side-scrolling shooter genre, but like with many games, it's often hard to revisit their history. R-Types, the PSone title that collects the first two games in the series, should be a shooter fan's dream, but mostly serves to remind the player of far better games. Lacking the finesse of later releases like R-Type III: The Third Lightning or R-Type Final, these two games feel sluggish and frustrating in comparison. In both games, your ship moves like it is flying through a sea of molasses, and the lack of analog control is hard to adjust to. The blistering difficulty that the series and genre is known for is definitely present, but it feels more due to handicapped controls than fair challenge. The two-player mode merely switches off between two players, which seems completely antiquated in today's co-op game climate. R-Types does have a history feature, and the two games do make a nice package for completists, but they should be warned that these games may not be as fun as they remember.

*Score given to the game when it first appeared in Game Informer. Thousand Arms (GI #79 11/99, Star Wars: Masters of Teras Kasi (GI # 57 01/98)

GAMEOVER

You Have Been Eaten By A Grue

VIDEO GAME TRIVIA

With a hot new game always on the horizon, it can be tough for some video game characters to stay in the public eye. Since there are no trashy tabloids to detail their weekly exploits, sometimes an endorsement deal is the only way to grab some extra publicity. Answer the questions below to find out which questionable products you'll see your favorite heroes shilling on late-night infomercials.

1 Tracking the lineage of the characters in the Castlevania series is no easy task. Which of these dudes isn't a part of the Belmont bloodline?
- **A.** Reinhardt
- **B.** Soma
- **C.** Juste
- **D.** Julius

2 Developer Level 5, which made the recent Dragon Quest VIII, was also behind which of these early PS2 role-playing games?
- **A.** Dark Cloud
- **B.** Summoner
- **C.** Orphen: Scion of Sorcery
- **D.** Evergrace

3 Street Fighter isn't Capcom's only series filled with bizarre brawlers. Which of the company's B-list fighters features characters like Demitri, Felicia, and Morrigan?
- **A.** Darkstalkers
- **B.** Tech Romancer
- **C.** Rival Schools
- **D.** Red Earth

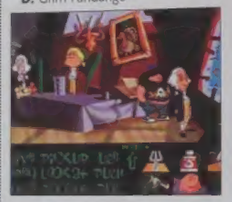
4 Which of these titles from last year's E3 coverage has actually seen a retail release since the 2005 show?
- **A.** Demonik
- **B.** Possession
- **C.** A Boy and his Blob
- **D.** GripShift

5 What voice actor provided the spoken dialogue for such classic game characters as Solidus Snake, Canderous Ordo, and Dash Rendar?
- **A.** Quinton Flynn
- **B.** Christopher Randolph
- **C.** John Cygan
- **D.** Charlie Martinet

6 If there's one thing a football-like sport needs, it's lots of dying. What publisher realized this fact, foisting Deathrow on the gaming public?
- **A.** Acclaim
- **B.** Ubisoft
- **C.** THQ
- **D.** Infogrames

7 The first step to having a great action game is having a lead character with an awesome name. Dead to Rights failed on this front, starring the colossal doofus...
- **A.** Jack Slate
- **B.** Nick Kang
- **C.** Dingo Egret
- **D.** Max Power

8 Double Fine's resident genius Tim Schafer worked on some great games before last year's Psychonauts. Which of the following games came out first?
- **A.** Day of the Tentacle
- **B.** Secret of Monkey Island
- **C.** Full Throttle
- **D.** Grim Fandango



9 In Cold Fear, the dorkwad protagonist Tom Hansen was a part of what government organization?
- **A.** Tool Patrol
- **B.** FBI
- **C.** Marines
- **D.** Coast Guard

10 Remember Raze's Hell? Yeah, we barely do either. But it had some adorable, fuzzy things you could brutalize. What were they called again?
- **A.** Kuddles
- **B.** Kewletts
- **C.** Kewtletts
- **D.** Korn sucks!

BREAKDOWN

78% of all Breakdown facts were lost or destroyed in the Great Fact Fire of '06

19 people attended Norman Coolguy's "Totally Way Better Than E3" Expo. Most of them were working the show's only booth: NormSoftendo

4 weeks is all it took for Kingdom Hearts II to sell one million copies in the U.S., despite the Little Mermaid levels

31.4% is how much sales increased for Sony's game division last year, though profits still fell by 79.7%

0% of the bacon-wrapped hot dogs Jeremy ate at E3 killed him. Seriously, those things are like Russian Roulette in a bun – sooner or later, you lose

★ Trivia Score & Rank ★

0-1: Link Brand Pantyhose

2-3: Dante's Meatlover's Pizza

4-5: Yuna's Karaoke Mic

6-7: Master Chief Helmet Polish

8-9: Ryu's Fundoukens

10: Solid Snake's FiberBlast

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Video Game Trivia Answers: 1. B 2. A 3. A 4. D 5. C 6. B 7. A 8. B 9. D 10. B

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